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Mordechai: Lebanon pullout plan is advancing

 By ARNIE O'SULLIVAN
 and news agencies

The Resolution 425 initiative that would lead to a withdrawal from Lebanon is a serious one and is not losing momentum, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said yesterday.

"Reading the latest results from the United States [Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other people, whose names I can't reveal, it seems to me that this initiative is clear to everyone and is perhaps the only way that we can advance an arrangement and progress to peace in the North," Mordechai said.

In what could be a step towards acceptance of the initiative, Channel 1 reported last night that Syria has told the US that it would be willing to guarantee quiet along Israel's northern border following an IDF pullout from Lebanon, on condition that



Priestly blessing

Kohanim bless the people at the Western Wall yesterday. Some 20,000 participated in the ceremony, held on each of the three annual pilgrimage festivals.

(Kevin Unger)

Shekel falls 1.8% vs. dollar

Edgy market awaits details of liberalization plan

By DAN GERSTENFELD

The shekel depreciated 1.8 percent against the dollar in interbank trading yesterday, falling to a new all-time low of NIS 3.758. The shekel has declined 3.8% since the beginning of the month.

However, the Bank of Israel did not set its representative rates yesterday, as most European markets were closed for Easter. This means that anyone doing business based on the representative rate yesterday used the one from Thursday - NIS 3.6920.

During the day, the dollar traded in a range of NIS 3.71 to NIS 3.76, reflecting the market's nervousness. Against the central bank's currency basket, the shekel dropped 1.85%, pushing the basket for the first time above NIS 4.00.

By the end of the trading day, the basket was at NIS 4.011.

Dealers said trading was nervous, with the dollar rising on a relatively low volume as many players were not active because of Pessah. In addition, local companies that had to receive or transfer money abroad could not act yesterday because of Easter.

The accelerated market activity followed media reports on Friday of details of the government's planned liberalization program. While details are not scheduled to be released until the end of this month, Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel is calling for them to be published sooner, so as to prevent uncertainty in the market.

"The market is very nervous," said Ronit Schwartz of Union Bank. "All the headlines in the newspapers concerning the shekel liberalization are very confusing, and there is much uncertainty in the market."

See SHEKEL, Page 2

Like any other currency

ANALYSIS

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Economists have been warning for three years that the shekel is overvalued and that it is inevitably bound to undergo a sharp depreciation.

Still, it is too early to say whether the market volatility we have been witnessing in recent days marks the beginning of that long-expected adjustment.

Experts believe that even if the market stabilizes in the coming days, with the shekel recovering some of the ground it has lost, it will not return to the kind of

strength which has characterized it since the middle of the decade.

The immediate trigger behind the shekel's recent decline was Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel's announcement, while presenting the central bank's annual report, that the plan to make the shekel convertible in May will be the practical lifting of all restrictions on household currency dealings.

See CURRENCY, Page 2

Mordechai praises PA crackdown, Page 2

negotiations are renewed over a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Syria also said that if Israel agrees to its conditions, it would not link the negotiations to the Palestinian issue, Channel 1 said.

Still, Syrian President Hafez Assad and his Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi renewed their rejection of the 425 initiative after a summit in the Syrian port city of Latakia. The meeting came after Albright called on Lebanon to relate seriously to the Israeli offer.

In his remarks yesterday, Mordechai drew a comparison between the Lebanese situation and the peace agreement reached in Northern Ireland last weekend and said he would extend his hand to all those involved.

"I'd be very much delighted to meet tomorrow with the Lebanese and shake their hands and be very happy to meet with the Syrians and shake their hands too," Mordechai said.

After the Assad-Hrawi meeting, Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said that both had expressed readiness to resume peace talks with Israel and urged the United States to shoulder its responsibilities as a sponsor of negotiations.

Bui, Kourieh added, "the Lebanese side affirmed that Israel's conditions empty UN Resolution 425 of its meaning. They aim at sabotaging the peace process."

"Viewpoints of both sides were identical on all subjects discussed," Kourieh said.

"The conditions announced by the Israeli (inner) cabinet are dangerous both for Lebanon and for the whole peace process in the region," Kourieh said. "The two sides urged the United States to shoulder its responsibilities as a sponsor of the peace process."

"Both sides affirmed their readiness to resume peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point where they left off."

Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass visited Syrian troops in Lebanon yesterday and urged them to be on "permanent combat readiness to counter any aggression and to protect the nation from all dangers," officials said.

Heat wave to last through Pessah

By DAVID RUDGE

The sharav that has kept temperatures high since the beginning of Pessah is expected to last through the end of the holiday.

Initially, meteorological experts had forecast that the unseasonably hot and dry weather would break tomorrow or Thursday. The forecast was updated yesterday, however, and experts said that apart from some light relief in coastal areas, it would probably last until Friday.

Even then, temperatures were still expected to remain higher than usual for this time of year, through the weekend.

Robert Olinsky, the duty fore-

caster at the Meteorological Service in Beit Dagan said that such an extended dry and hot spell at this time of year had only occurred once before in the past 35 years, in the spring of 1994.

"Every two or three years there are spells like this which last for a few days, but an extended one of this intensity so early in the year is very unusual. Normally, these extended sharavs are in the fall, around October," he said.

Olinsky noted that there appeared to be a connection with the late winter being experienced in Europe. "When there's a trough in Europe, there is very often a ridge over this part of the world, and this is what has hap-

pened this time."

The heat has been taking its toll on both humans and animals.

Dozens of people had to be treated for the effects of dehydration yesterday, including a number of Thai workers who held celebrations at Ashkelon park in honor of the king of Thailand.

Scores of farmers have submitted claims for compensation to the agriculture natural disaster fund for damage to crops and livestock because of the heat.

Most of the damage has been caused to fruit orchards, bananas, field crops and poultry. There have also been reports that cows have been producing 15 percent less milk than usual.

Tourists ride through IDF firing zone

By ARNIE O'SULLIVAN

The IDF and cabinet members blasted vacationers for entering a firing zone in the Negev where IDF soldiers were training with live ammunition.

Two groups of dozens of civilians on motor bikes were touring in Nahal Zifim, in the southern Arava, yesterday.

According to Army Radio, the bikers did not coordinate their visit as required by the IDF. No one was injured.

See TOURISTS, Page 2

Expert: Ethiopian blood ban is pointless

By JUDY SIEGEL

A professor of medicine at Yale University's School of Management claims in the latest issue of the British medical journal *The Lancet* that barring blood donations by Ethiopian immigrants would prevent "at most only one donation of HIV-infected blood" every 10 years.

Prof. Edward Kaplan, a Hebrew-speaking expert in management science, writes a two-page "Viewpoint" in the April 11 issue of the prestigious medical journal that is chock full of mathematical calculations.

Kaplan refers to statements by the Health Ministry and Magen David Adom during the Ethiopian blood "scandal" in 1996 that Ethiopian olim are 50 times more likely to be HIV carriers than the general population.

"The question is not whether the prevalence of infection among Ethiopian immigrants is 50 times greater than among other Israelis, but whether the incremental number of infectious donations prevented by exclusion of Ethiopian donors is sufficiently large to justify such a ban," Kaplan said.

"This latter quantity depends on the number of discarded Ethiopian donations, in addition to the per-donation risk of contamination."

See ETHIOPIAN, Page 3

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Two youths die in hiking accidents

By DAVID RUDGE

Rescue services went to the aid of dozens of lost or dehydrated hikers and holidaymakers yesterday and Sunday, following the death of a Petah Tikva youth in a hiking accident.

An 11-year-old from Herzliya also died on Sunday, after falling off a cliff while hiking in Jordan. The body of Moshe Kanon, 14, from Petah Tikva, was discovered around midnight Sunday in the Nahal Arugot region. He went missing while hiking with his parents after telling them he wanted to go alone to see a waterfall in the area.

He did not meet them at the appointed place and rescue services were alerted. Searches were conducted through the evening and night until his body was eventually found.

Ifrah Shein, 11, of Herzliya, was killed when he fell from a cliff in Jordan's Nahal Armon region. His parents and another family traveling with them managed to retrieve the youngster, but he died of his injuries, despite efforts by Jordanian doctors and paramedics to save his life.

Police and members of the Golan and Galilee mountain rescue teams went to the aid of dozens of hikers and visitors in various parts of the North yesterday, following a series of similar

incidents the previous day.

At least eight separate rescue operations were carried out in the course of the day, as day-trippers found themselves in difficulties caused by the heat, or simply lost their way.

A group of 25 hikers who went missing in the Nahal Sion area on the northern reaches of the Golan Heights on Sunday were found safe and well early yesterday morning.

In another part of the Golan, three young women who had been reported missing were located and brought to safety.

In the Nahal Meshushim area of the Golan, seven students from Bar-Ilan University went missing. Three were found straight away, but the four others, who had taken a different route, were only located several hours later.

An IAF helicopter was called in yesterday to help evacuate a woman who suffered head injuries in a rafting accident on the rapids of the northern reaches of the Jordan River. Police and mountain rescue crews were also involved in the operation. The injured woman was taken by the helicopter to Safed's Rebecca Sieff hospital for treatment.

Magen David Adom paramedics went to the assistance of two people who suffered from dehydration while on hiking trips with their families in the Nahal Amud region

of Galilee. A woman and an elderly man were later taken to Poriya Hospital near Tiberias for further treatment.

In another section of the Golan, rescue teams helped evacuate a man who suffered a heart attack. He also was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Two separate groups people hiking in the Nahal Yehudia and Nahal Azki areas of the Golan went missing after losing their way and were helped to safety by police and the mountain rescue team.

In another rescue operation last night, a group of 15 hikers were brought to safety after they ran into difficulties and lack of water south of the Dead Sea.

Police noted that in some cases hikers and parents with young children deliberately ignored no entry or no bathing signs.

The police spokesman for the Galilee region urged all hikers to ensure they were properly equipped, had sufficient water, mobile phones for emergencies and that they did not stray from marked routes.

He also recommended those going on hikes coordinate their trips beforehand with the appropriate bodies, including the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, the Nature Reserves Authority and the police.



Dror and Ron, members of a new IDF rescue unit in the Dead Sea region, take part in a training exercise. (IDF Spokesman)

'Sunday Times' correspondent: Hamas bombmaker's death to be avenged

By DOUGLAS DAVIS

LONDON. — The Ramallah wing of the Hamas Izzadine al-Kassam Brigades will mount a terrorist attack against at least one target in Israel within the "next few weeks", ostensibly to avenge the death of Hamas bomb-maker Muhi Sharif for which Israel has denied responsibility, according to a respected British journalist.

After the attack, the Ramallah wing plans to announce that it had broken away from the main body of Hamas in order to

absolve Hamas from responsibility and prevent a crackdown on the organization by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, acting under pressure from Washington.

This strategy was outlined by Marie Colvin, the well-connected Middle East correspondent of the London *Sunday Times*, quoting Palestinian sources.

She also revealed that Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, currently receiving medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, warned that a renewed Hamas bombing campaign could ignite

a civil war among the Palestinians.

His warning, however, has been effectively ignored by both the "outside" Hamas leaders and by young Hamas militants in the West Bank and Gaza.

In another development, the paper reported that "a senior member of the Saudi royal family" had made a \$25 million gift to Hamas, raising fears that the influx of funds could be used to underwrite a bombing campaign against Israel.

A substantial part of the "gift" has reportedly been earmarked for

the Kassam Brigades, while some of the rest will fund Hamas social-welfare activities, which generate grass-roots support for the organization.

The paper also reported that Hamas is investigating the possibility of investing some of the money in Britain and it quoted Palestinian sources as saying the organization is particularly interested in the lucrative catering business, as well as importing broad beans, Halal meat and other Middle Eastern delicacies for London's wealthy Moslem community.

Meretz MKs meet with King Hussein in Amman

By LIAT COLLINS

AMMAN — King Hussein yesterday told a delegation of Meretz MKs he hopes the US will play an important role in solving the problems in the Middle East.

At a meeting in his palace in Amman, he said the Middle East will be the focus of attention now that the Northern Ireland issue has reached an agreement.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid said his party is "very concerned" about the state of the peace process.

"Our dearest wish is for the Israeli government to do whatever it can for the cause of peace," said King Hussein.

Sarid and the king decided that a joint delegation of parliamentarians from Israel, Jordan and the

Palestinian Authority will visit the US and Europe to show their desire for peace.

Hussein said he saw the Meretz parliamentarians as partners but that such meetings are not an alternative to meetings with the Netanyahu government. He also called for more contacts between the peoples, not just their leaders.

"We hope the US will carry out an important role as it has done in the Irish crisis, and Europe as well [will play] a supporting role," the king said at a press conference after the meeting.

"I believe hopefully we will now see our problems in this part of the world becoming the focus of attention."

Sarid also unequivocally called for "firm, consistent and balanced" US involvement.

He rejected the suggestion that

this meant inviting foreign pressure, however. "Pressure is harmful and counterproductive," he said. But he repeated his stand that "If Camp David was US pressure, then I'm in favor of it."

The king denied reports that he would meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Akaba. The premier is vacationing in Eilat with his family.

In a closed meeting, Sarid and the monarch apparently spoke about the Irish dispute and what lessons could be learned from it, despite the differences.

Before the meeting, the Meretz MKs were invited to a meal at a nearby youth center where Sarid asked that there be no bread on the tables because of Pessah. (The group later had tea at an Amman patisserie.)

Mordechai praises PA's crackdown on terrorists

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

In a rare positive statement on the Palestinian Authority, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said unequivocally that he was satisfied with their crackdown on Hamas terrorists.

"I am satisfied with the process that has begun," Mordechai said. "The main thing that interests me is how long it will last and how intensive and serious it is and how the authority will translate what has been revealed to it into a persistent action that will bring about results and that the results show a different way of confronting terror and terrorist components."

Speaking at a ceremony renaming Gilot base in honor of Chaim Herzog, the sixth president, Mordechai said the increased awareness of the Hamas threat on the PA was the only factor in

the Hamas-PA feud that mattered to him.

"The authority understands today more clearly the terror and the terrorist infrastructure and the weapons that exist out there," he told reporters. "It is without a doubt clear to [the PA] today that if it doesn't deal intensively and persistently with what they are uncovering on the ground, then the authority will have problems and we will certainly have troubles."

Israeli defense officials have been reluctant to comment on or in any way get involved with the steps being taken by Palestinian security forces against Islamic militants.

Still, Israeli security officials have long demanded that the PA take a stronger hand against the Hamas infrastructure.

Security sources said the PA was also concerned with the wide Hamas support in the "Palestinian street."

He said, the crackdown could "bring some Hamas terrorists to the attention of Israelis in order to swing the balance in their favor."

Faisal Hussein, who is responsible for Jerusalem for the PA, told Army Radio that he welcomed Mordechai's comments.

"I hope that the Israeli side understands that security for us is so very important, because we too want to build our economy and this can't happen without security," Hussein said. "But for full security we need to have full control. The more control you give us the more security we will be able to provide."

Hussein added that the latest crackdown has shown that the PA was capable of doing more than the Israelis could.

"Give us full control over our areas and you will see that all will go smoothly," Hussein said.

Netanyahu: Moscow aid to Iran could hurt ties

MOSCOW (AP) — In an interview to be published in today's edition of the *Izvestia* daily, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the possibility of missile know-how being transferred to Iran was standing in the way of expanded Israeli-Russian ties, the Interfax news agency said.

Netanyahu said that the Russian government had "issued certain instructions" but that the time had come for "practical deeds."

"We were assured that the Russian leadership is doing its utmost to prevent the leakage of rocket technologies to Iran. I hope the words will be backed by concrete steps," according to Interfax. Russia acknowledges that Iran had tried to obtain missile know-how, but said all such attempts had been thwarted.

Netanyahu threatened three weeks ago to ask the US Congress to impose sanctions on Russia over the transfer of weapons know-how to Iran, a government official said. In the *Izvestia* interview, Netanyahu said Iran was a year to 18 months away from developing its own ballistic missile.

Imad Awadallah, on orders of his brother, Adel, shot Sharif to death and with four colleagues bombed the Ramallah garage to conceal the assassination.

PA sources said the assassination was part of a feud between Adel Awadallah and Sharif over leadership of Izzadine Kassam, an \$800,000 stipend from Hamas abroad, and allegations that Sharif collaborated with Israel.

The PA released Islamic Jihad leader Abdullah Shami after four days in detention. In a Friday sermon in a Gaza mosque, Shami had accused the PA of being responsible for Sharif's death.

PA sources said Shami was released when he promised he would not repeat the accusation.

PA increases pressure on Hamas

By STEVE RODAN and MOHAMMED NAJIB

The Palestinian Authority yesterday continued its offensive against Hamas, as the Palestinian Legislative Council prepared for today's discussion of the controversial official inquiry into the death of bombmaker Muhi Sharif, which attributes the assassination to his colleagues.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Ramallah yesterday and met with Preventive Security chief Jibril Rajoub and later headed a session of the Fatah central committee to discuss the Sharif killing and the conclusions of the investigation. The discussion is regarded as a briefing that will direct Fatah mem-

bers of the PLC in today's session.

In Gaza, Fatah distributed a leaflet calling the PA crackdown on Hamas legal and urging that Palestinians cooperate with law enforcement officials. PA officials said Hamas has refused to cooperate with their investigation for fear of being seen as confirming its conclusions.

Hamas leaders charged that the PA, on orders from Israel, was behind the assassination of Sharif. They said the confession obtained from Hamas student leader Ghassan Adassi was the result of three days of torture.

But PLC member Khatem Abdul Khader, a Fatah member from the Jerusalem region, said he did not detect any sign of torture during

his meeting with Adassi last week. I asked him to walk and I asked him if his conscience is comfortable. If he did this from me, he is guilty and not me," Khader said.

PA security forces continued to arrest Islamic militants. In Nabulus, PA police arrested 14 An-Najah University students suspected of participating in a Hamas rally over the weekend.

PA officials said security forces have so far arrested more than 100 Islamic militants. Hamas leaders said the figure is about 300.

Gaza Hamas spokesman Mahmoud Zahar stressed that his organization does not seek a confrontation with the PA and has offered to help in the investigation into Sharif's death.

The PA is said to believe that

coming days, with no clear direction on low volume, as the business sector was not very active."

Dealers attributed part of the activity to investors who repaid foreign currency-linked loans on fears that the shekel would continue to decline in the near future.

"Investors are protecting themselves against a sharp devaluation, but the shekel could also start rising soon," said one trader.

CURRENCY

Continued from Page 1

Subsequent media reports of details pertaining to the currency reform program, though aimed at clearing up the uncertainty which shrouded the plan, effectively only added to it.

As even economists are divided

over the possible implications of the currency liberalization, the public once again found initial refuge in the dollar.

In addition to the convertibility situation, economists also cite the central bank's gradual decrease in interest rates as a cause for investors to shun the shekel.

During recent months the inter-

est rate differential — which gauges the difference between local and foreign interest rates — has decreased, said Victor Shohet, chief economist at Ofek Securities.

"Now, with the introduction of the liberalization plan, the risk in the forex market has also risen, pushing investors to buy dollars."

Instructions, and this is the result," said Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan, a former chief of general staff.

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SHEKEL

Continued from Page 1

She added that holiday-time low liquidity accelerated the shekel's depreciation. "Many companies are not active today, and on such a day every report can create hysteria."

Other dealers said the shekel is expected to remain volatile in the

coming days, with no clear direction on low volume, as the business sector was not very active."

Dealers attributed part of the activity to investors who repaid foreign currency-linked loans on fears that the shekel would continue to decline in the near future.

"Investors are protecting themselves against a sharp devaluation, but the shekel could also start rising soon," said one trader.

With great sorrow we announce the passing of our dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

Rev. ISAAC PAKTER

The funeral will take place today, Tuesday, April 14, 1998, at 12 noon at Har Hamenuhot (Beit Hahesped opp. Herzog Hospital).

Shiva from Motzai Shabbat at Unterman 1/1, Gilo, Jerusalem.

Mourning by:

Wife: Minnie

Children: Ephraim and Zippi Pakter
Annette and Jeff Broide
Herschy and Linda Pakter
And their families

TOURISTS

Continued from Page 1

Ezri Eilon, head of the Eilat region of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, said he was sure most of the bikers knew the firing zone was not fenced off, though it was clearly marked. He said they knew the procedures needed to tour there, but "simply disregarded them, took a needless risk and, in this instance,

came close to a bad ending."

The IDF said it ordered its troops to cease firing immediately and halted all live-fire exercises in the area until a proper sweep could be conducted to make sure no other tourists were on the grounds.

The army said it has opened up some training grounds for tourists during Pessah, but stressed that all visits must be coordinated with the IDF or local field schools.

"They are ignoring the signs and

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Palestinian human rights group:

PA killed alleged collaborator

By STEVE RODAN

A Palestinian human rights group yesterday accused the Palestinian General Intelligence Service of killing a 37-year-old Palestinian from the Ramallah area, who was found shot to death last week on his way to an interrogation at the security agency's headquarters.

Mohammed Anqawi was found dead with nine bullet holes on April 6 on a side street in Ein Monjed in PA territory. Anqawi's car was still parked at the entrance of the intelligence service headquarters in Ramallah.

The Palestinian Human Rights

Monitoring Group, headed by Bassem Eid, said it believes Anqawi was shot dead by agents of the intelligence service while the Palestinian contractor was heading toward the service's office.

"The body was found at 1:45 p.m. on April 6," the human rights organization said in a statement, "while Anqawi called his friend Issa Shkukani [to tell him] that he was on his way to the CI [General Intelligence] office in the headquarters at 1:20, and he was 10 minutes away from there. PHRMG believes that Anqawi was murdered in the period of time

between 1:30 p.m. and 1:40 p.m., as it seems by the hands of [the intelligence service]."

Anqawi, a resident of Beit Seera village in the Ramallah area, was married with 10 children. The human rights group said he was arrested by the Palestinian Preventive Security on April 17, 1996, and was interrogated for being a suspected collaborator for Israel.

The human rights group said Anqawi wasn't convicted or sent to trial. After 20 days in detention, he was released.

The PA has not released any information regarding Anqawi's death.



Barred from Temple Mount

Gershon Salomon, leader of the Temple Mount Faithful speaks through a bullhorn yesterday while standing outside the Mugrabi Gate, proclaiming that "the Temple Mount will be liberated." Police prevented the Solomon's group from praying on the Mount.

(Brian Heller)

HEBREW PRESS REVIEW

By ORLY AHARONI

Historic agreement

The peace agreement reached in Northern Ireland received much press attention. The media was tempted to compare the situation in Ireland with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The main message that the agreement sends... is that there are no lost causes," states MK Shlomo Ben-Ami in *Yediot Aharonot*. But he claims that the solution in Northern Ireland is not applicable to the territories. The main difference is that "there is an independent Irish state, while there is no independent Palestinian one."

"They are dealing with a bitter medicine which might cure a country in conflict," writes *Ha'aretz's* Moti Gadi, adding that the main condition for the success of the agreement lies in the disarmament of all underground organizations.

Former MK Geula Cohen claims that as opposed to the Irish, the Israelis cannot afford to yield to the Arabs. "A wrong compromise leads to war," she writes in *Ma'ariv*, "and we will reach our own solution when the Palestinians have political sovereignty in Jordan."

According to *Ma'ariv's* Chemi Shalev, from now on, "Israel will be even more unusual, even more isolated than before."

He says that it is difficult to compare the situation in Ireland with Israel, but the agreement will still have an effect on our peace process. "It will bring a renewed momentum, especially from the Americans, to settle conflicts wherever they may be."

Prof. Emanuel Gutman in *Yediot* concludes that the lesson to be

learned is that "every side should eventually yield, because nations or hostile groups that live years in conflict finally reach the point where they have had enough."

Power struggles

The growing tension between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas following mutual accusations as to who was responsible for the death of bombmaker Muhi Sharif, is harmful to Israel, claims *Ha'aretz's* Uzi Benziman. He believes that it might lead to a civil war that would threaten PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's position and "as a result the next Palestinian leader might be Sheik Ahmed Yassin or someone like him."

Ma'ariv's Avraham Tirosh wonders if the arrests of Hamas members constitute a genuine war against Hamas or another round of the revolving door.

Culture patron

Ha'aretz's Yair Sheleg fails to understand the fuss over Education Minister Yitzhak Levy's proposal that Oriental Jewish folk art be promoted over the classical Western "art of the elite." "The representatives of the 'deprived,' Levy in this case, do not mean to deny Western culture but to add a central tinge to the Israeli cultural texture."

Yaron London in *Yediot* states that Levy's suggestion is an indication that he has adopted a post-modern approach in contradiction to his typical point of view. "We can explain Levy's contradiction as his immediate reply to populist-ethnic state of mind."

Pessah heat

"If we are to identify with the Jews' departure from Egypt as we are told, then let's do it all the way," writes *Ma'ariv's* Tirosh, comparing the current heat wave with the conditions that the Israelites had to endure in the desert. "This surely links us to our history."

Abu Dis man charged with Old City murder

Iman Sharbati, 31, of Abu Dis, was charged in Lod Military Court yesterday with murdering Gavriel Hirschberg and seriously wounding Binyamin Dil. Sharbati allegedly shot the yeshiva student to death in Jerusalem's Old City in November.

Ghaja Hadad, 19, of Jerusalem,

was charged with being an accomplice.

According to the charge sheet, after the clashes over the Western Wall Tunnel in September 1996, Sharbati decided to carry out a terror attack. He then bought an AK-47 and ammunition, smuggled them into the Old City, and enlisted

Hadad to join him. The two then surveyed the Old City to decide on a site. Hadad's job was to watch for soldiers and passersby while Sharbati shot, the charge sheet said.

On the night of November 19, they allegedly shot Hirschberg and Dil as the students were walking back to their dormitory in the

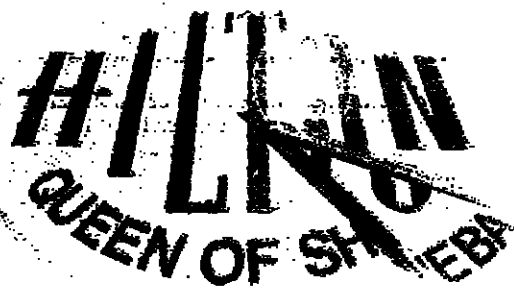
Moslem Quarter.

Sharbati and Hadad also prepared firebombs and used them against Israeli security forces, the charge sheet said.

Court President Lt.-Col. Elisha Caspi postponed the continuation of proceedings against Sharbati and Hadad until May 6. (Itim)



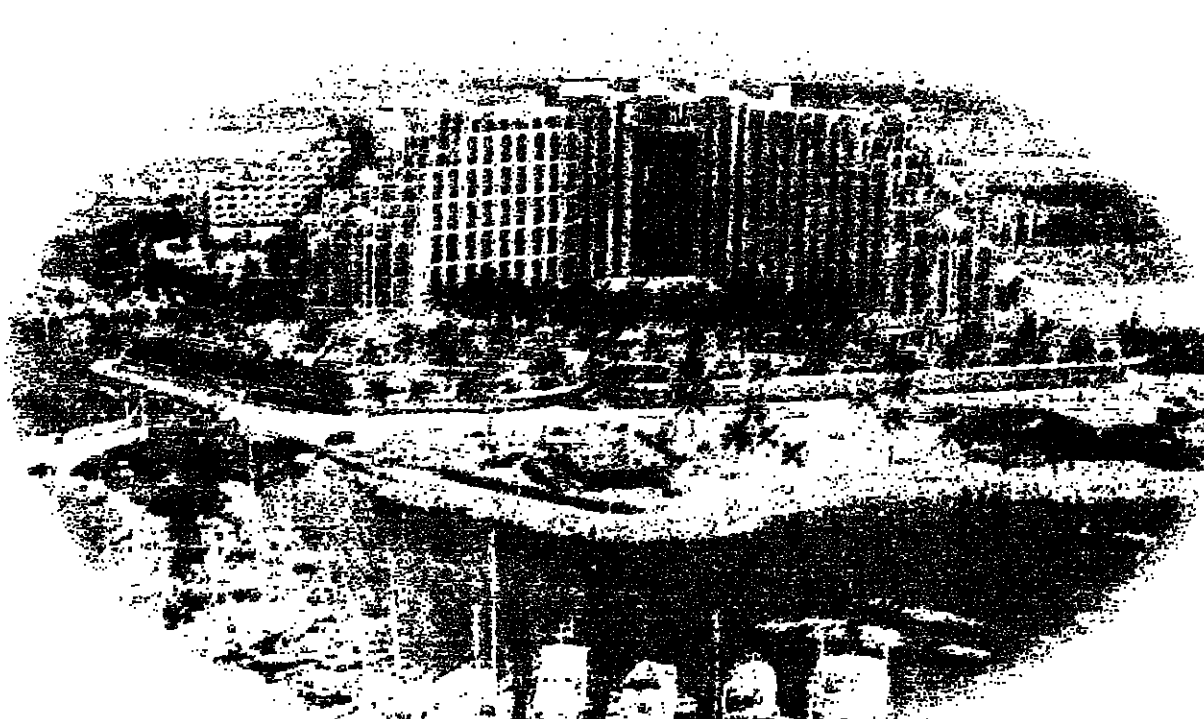
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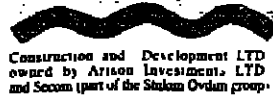


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ETHIOPIAN

Continued from Page 1

Kaplan notes that virtually all HIV infections among Ethiopian immigrants have occurred among adults who have immigrated since 1991, and that almost 25,000 of the 42,000 Ethiopian Israelis over 15 came before that.

This, he says, reduces the presumed HIV-incidence rate for the Ethiopian donor pool to 2.9 per 1,000 uninfected people per year. Of nearly 222,000 annual blood donations by non-Ethiopian Israelis, 1.1 in one million are estimated to be infected, and of 480 annual donations from Ethiopian Israelis, 2.0 per 10,000 would be infected.

So Kaplan concludes that banning Ethiopian Jews from donating blood reduced the annual number of HIV-infected donations from 0.34 to 0.24, an absolute reduction of only 0.1 donations per year — or one in 10 years.

Dr. Eilat Shinar, director of MDA's blood services, commented that she and her staff are responsible for supplying blood and blood components to those who need it for saving lives.

"To reduce to a minimum the risk of being infected with transfusion-transmitted diseases," she said, Health Ministry and international regulations include the rule not to use blood donated by groups of people who are significantly more likely to be HIV carriers. A single blood unit can be used to produce blood components for three or four patients, and plasma is combined for giving to thousands of others. Thus, she said, a single infected donation can infect many patients.

"Everyone has the right to voice his opinion, as long as he doesn't have to take responsibility for a situation in which — God forbid — a single person is infected with a disease that could have been prevented," Shinar said.

As a result of the revelation that blood donated by Ethiopians

was destroyed, the Navon Commission investigated and issued a report that has been partially implemented.

Blood donated by Ethiopians and others who have visited or lived in areas with high HIV rates is frozen for six months, and only if the donor returns and is found to be "clean" can his original donation be used. In the last two years, 150 pints given by Ethiopian immigrants have been frozen.

In addition, a more detailed questionnaire is given to all potential donors in an effort to better rule out infected donors. Although blood donations plummeted during the "scandal," they returned to normal soon after "when the public began to understand the matter, and that no racism was involved," the MDA official said.

Shinar concluded that if and when the "window" period between infection and the showing up of HIV antibodies in blood tests closes completely, anyone will be able to donate blood. "But the window remains, not only for HIV, but also for hepatitis C."

Asked to comment on the Yale paper, Labor MK Adisu Massala said it backed up arguments of the Ethiopian community here, which regards the rejection of their blood as a "slap in the face."

The Ethiopian-born MK said the Health Ministry and MDA policy caused "irreversible damage to the absorption of the immigrants" and that since the Navon report was issued, "nothing substantial was implemented. There is no educational effort in the community to prevent the spread of AIDS," he said.

Massala also argued that former health minister Tzahi Hanegbi and his successor Yehoshua Mazza "are not looking for a solution." He said giving blood is not pleasant, "but it is an Israeli experience from which Ethiopian immigrants are barred."

NEWS

in brief

Netanyahu enjoying Eilat

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his family, vacationing in Eilat, yesterday visited the Dolphin Reef and fed the dolphins. Netanyahu related to reporters that on the flight down, his son Yair asked him if Eilat is in a foreign country and if Hebrew is spoken there. *Jim*

Worker injured in gas explosion

A gas tank at the Tadiran plant in the Holon industrial area exploded yesterday afternoon. A worker at an adjacent carpentry shop was lightly injured by shrapnel and three cars were damaged. The injured man was taken to Wolfson Hospital. *Jim*

Vanunu's condition improved - brother

Nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu has become more relaxed since his release from solitary confinement last month and has been accepted by the other prisoners, his brother Asher said yesterday. Vanunu, who is serving 18 years, will have his first parole hearing next week, Asher said.

British human rights campaigners have collected more than 17,000 signatures on a petition seeking Vanunu's early release, and plan to hand it to President Ezer Weizman next week. *AP*

Pessah shuttle service to Jewish Quarter

Because the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City is closed to private cars, Karta, the Central Jerusalem Development Company, is running a mini-bus shuttle service during the intermediate days of Pessah.

The service is being provided in conjunction with the municipality and Egged.

The buses will leave from Karta parking lot in Mamilla outside Jaffa Gate and proceed to the Jewish Quarter, the Western Wall, Mount Zion, and back to the parking lot, the same route as the No. 38 bus.

It will run every 15 minutes from 8 a.m. until the evening hours. The cost will be the same NIS 4.80 as a regular bus ride; riders can also use a monthly bus pass. *Elli Wohlgelerner*

3,000 capital families sought Pessah aid

Noam Shabbat answered requests from a record 3,000-plus Jerusalem area families for assistance this Pessah, according to spokesman Yehuda Eckstein. The total is more than a 10 percent increase over 1997 figures.

"I am sorry to say that the number of needy families has increased from a year ago," Eckstein said. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Bentsur to raise Sakic case in Zagreb

By JAY BUSHINSKY

Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur is expected to discuss the case of Dinko Sakic, the fugitive ex-commandant of Croatia's Jasenovac death camp, when he meets government officials in Zagreb today. Sources said he will not suggest that Sakic be extradited to Israel. Instead, Bentsur will recommend that the projected extradition

from Argentina, where Sakic, 76, has been living for the past 31 years, be to Croatia, the scene of his alleged crimes against humanity. Argentine President Carlos Menem ordered Sakic's arrest last week, and indicated that he would not oppose extradition. At a meeting with Serbian President Milan Milutinovic in Belgrade, Bentsur was told that Iranian agents have been agitating the predominantly Moslem population of

Kosovo to secede from the remnant of Yugoslavia controlled by the Serbs. The Iranian presence in Kosovo was described as being substantial and extensive and the Iranians there are said to have penetrated virtually all walks of life. Trade and economic issues dominated Bentsur's talks with Milutinovic and other Serbian officials, however. Bentsur was informed that Serbia is interest-

ed in tightening its commercial links with Israel "in accordance with current international circumstances." This diplomatic phrase was interpreted to mean that the Serbs seek to deal in products and commodities not affected by restrictions imposed by the world community. For the past two weeks, the Belgrade government has been subject to a strict embargo barring shipments of arms and ammunition to its military forces.



El Hama'ayan rally

Thousands attend an assembly of Shas' educational arm El Hama'ayan at Gan Sacher in Jerusalem yesterday. At the rally, attended by top Shas officials, MK Aryeh Deri attacked both Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak for his plan to draft yeshiva students and the media. "When there are no terrorist attacks or other disasters, the media start to fan hatred against the hard-core public," Deri told the crowd. *(Ariel Jerozolimski)*

Lebanese acquitted of firing Katyushas

A Lebanese accused of belonging to Hizbullah and firing Katyusha rockets at Israel was acquitted on grounds of reasonable doubt by Lod Military Court yesterday.

After a trial behind closed doors, Court President Lt.-Col. Elisha Caspi ruled that Ali Ahmed Banjak, 21, from the village of Shatiya, be expelled from the country within 48 hours.

"I was astounded at the acquittal," Banjak told reporters afterward, "but the truth was proven. I didn't do anything. I was really surprised at the decision to acquit me, because generally when someone is taken in Lebanon, he gets a heavy sentence."

Banjak said he was captured in Nabatiya by South Lebanese Army troops, assisted by the IDF. "Immediately after my capture," he said, "I was questioned for 24 hours in south Lebanon, then I was transferred to Israel, where I was interrogated intensively."

He said the acquittal of other administrative detainees would increase the trust in Israel's courts and justice system. *(Jim)*

IDF announces grants for combat soldiers

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The IDF announced yesterday that it would be giving NIS 5,000 grants twice a year to combat soldiers who are eligible for family allowances.

The army said the move was agreed upon by the Manpower Branch as a way to encourage service in field units. It said that the money would come from the Schulzman fund, in coordination with the Association for the Well-Being of Israel's Soldiers.

The grants will be made at Pessah

and Rosh Hashana, the army said.

The first grants were handed out this month to male and female soldiers with A and A+ field status and with a minimum of five months service, the army said.

There are about 3,300 soldiers eligible for family allowances, but this money is given on a graduated basis according to financial need. The maximum monthly payment is NIS 2,600. Most of those eligible are not combat soldiers. The army did not have any figures on how many soldiers this new grant would affect.

IDF renames Gilot Camp Herzog

Decision in honor of state's 50th anniversary

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

"If he was asked how he'd like to be remembered, he'd have said as an army man and a man of the Intelligence Corps," said Aura Herzog, widow of former intelligence chief Chaim Herzog, who had an IDF base named after him yesterday.

The IDF Intelligence training school at Gilot, south of Herzliya, was renamed Camp Herzog as part of a decision to rename a number of bases after great generals in honor of the state's 50th anniversary.

The IDF's top commanders spoke of Herzog's contribution to the state, first as a soldier and author, later as a diplomat, and finally as the sixth president.

Herzog's family said he always considered his years in service as his most significant. As a young officer, Herzog set up the fledgling IDF's Intelligence Corps and later commanded it before mustering out of the service in the early 1960s. Herzog died last April 17. His son Mike is today a colonel in the Intelligence Corps and is carrying on the legacy, Aura Herzog said.

Herzog's third son Isaac said had his father been alive this week, he would have truly been moved by the steps toward peace taken in Belfast, the city of his birth.

"Dad grew up in the shadow of a civil war and it influenced him very much," Isaac Herzog said. "I think this week he would have looked upon what happened in Ireland with appreciation that there may be a chance for peace."

"Dad was a soldier. He knew what it was to fight and to make peace. Today closes a circle since his biggest contribution as a soldier was setting up the Intelligence Corps," said Herzog, a Tel Aviv attorney. "The youth know of him because he was the president, but they don't always understand how this wonderful generation grew up and created a state. He was only 30 when he set up the Intelligence Corps," he said, pulling out black-and-white photos of his father and a 27-year-old Yitzhak Rabin. "I am sure that the army, the Intelligence Corps, will know how to teach to them who it was who started it all."

Attending the ceremony were Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin Shahak, OC Intelligence Corps Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, and past heads of the corps.

No leads in kibbutz rape-murder case

There still are

no suspects or leads regarding the rape and murder of Yami Regav.

Yami Regav, 23, on Saturday near her home at Kibbutz Na'an, police said yesterday.

"I want to thank, in the name of our family, all of Kibbutz Na'an and everyone who came to honor our daughter," Regav's father said to the hundreds of people gathered in the kibbutz cemetery as she was buried yesterday. "I am sorry that we have to gather for this reason. I thank you for coming to see the flower we are burying in the earth. I hope that this will be the last time that something like this happens, that we will learn a lesson and do everything we can to make this the last time."

"Yami, wait another moment, give us a chance to say, 'Thank you,' a friend said in a eulogy. "We went through a lot together; it wasn't always easy, but we were able to do it all. When I hear the name Yami, I see before my eyes



Yami Regav

(Yochanan Shaul)

the giant smile you always had."

A kibbutz member, also read from a letter Regav had sent to a potential employer to describe herself: "My approach to life is optimistic, and I view life as a big adventure."

Central Region Police formed a special investigative committee to look into Regav's murder. After consulting with Jerusalem police, the committee concluded that Regav's murder was not connected with the rape and murder of 17-year-old Noa Eyal near Jerusalem's Ramot neighborhood in February.

Police released some 30 foreign workers employed by the kibbutz after determining that they had not been involved in the murder. Police also questioned volunteers at the kibbutz, though they have not yet completed gathering evidence from the friends Regav was with Friday night before she disappeared. *(Jim)*

Where to eat in Israel

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TANDOORI Indian Restaurant - The only restaurant in Israel where price SHAKES HANDS with QUALITY and quantity smiles. Live traditional Indian dancing daily. King's Wharf Lagoon Hotel. Tel./Fax: 07-633 879, 638 9674. Open noon-3:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.-midnight.

HERZLIYA PITUAH

TANDOORI Indian Restaurant - Only restaurant where price SHAKES HANDS with QUALITY and quantity smiles. Buffet Lunch NIS 49 (children NIS 24). Open noon-3 p.m.; 7 p.m.-1 a.m. Mercuzim Building, 32 Maskit St. Tel. 09-954 6702, Tel./Fax: 954 6786.

ATLANTIS FISH & SEA FOOD RESTAURANT - Three Course Business Lunch for only NIS 59 (incl. one glass of wine). Open daily noon-1 a.m. Mercuzim Building, 32 Maskit St. Tel. 09-956 8959.

JERUSALEM

ANGELO RISTORANTE ITALIANO - Frommer's 1997 Guide says, "The most superb pasta in the country." Also fresh fish & Roman specialties. Kasher Dairy. Call owners Angelo Di Segni / Lori Rosenblatt for reservations. 9 Harkanos. Tel. 02-623 6095.

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DARNA - Authentic Moroccan Restaurant, KOSHER. Our home is your home. Business lunch, salads, couscous, dessert, traditional mint tea. Only NIS 69, with this ad. Open 12-3 p.m., 8:30-11:30 p.m. 3 Harkanos St. Tel. 02-624 5406.

EUCALYPTUS - The taste of Israel from Biblical Days. Exquisite meat, fish & vegetarian dishes enhanced by a masterful use of herbs and spices. Luncheon specials. Evening entertainment. Rave reviews. Kasher. 7 Harkanos St. Tel. 02-624 4381.

KOHINOOR Kasher Indian Restaurant - Kashrut supervision by Rabbi Yosef Pink. Buffet lunch NIS 49 (children NIS 25) Open 12-4 p.m.; 6 p.m.-midnight. Holiday Inn Hotel, The Crowne Plaza. Tel. 02-658 8887, Tel./Fax: 02-653 6667.

LITTLE JERUSALEM - The Ticho House. Kasher Dairy & Fish. Open for breakfast, lunch, dinner. Delightful garden setting. Free entrance to the famous Anna Ticho Museum. Live Jazz Tuesday evenings. 9 Harkav Kook St. Tel. 02-624 4186.

NORMAN'S STEAKN BURGER - Freshest burgers, steaks, ribs, chicken, fish, salads and more, grilled to perfection. Family dining. Open during Pessah. Kasher Jerusalem Rabbinate. 27 Emek Refaim, German Colony. Tel. 02-566 6603.

RESTAURANT MISHKENOT SHAANANIM - Superb French cuisine for lunch & dinner, 7 days a week. Outstanding wine cellar, elegant setting - spectacular view - private room. Located in Yemin Moshe (below the Guest House). Tel. 02-625 1042.

RIENZI - Candlelight dining in an elegant decor. Fresh fish and homemade pasta. Kasher Umehadrim-Dairy. Open Hol HaMoed Pessah. Open Saturday night. 10 King David St. (Opp New Hilton Hotel). Tel. 02-622 2312.

A Jerusalem landmark - RIMON RESTAURANT Grilled Meats and Middle Eastern cuisine. CAFE RIMON Dairy and Fish. Superb pastry. Indoor-outdoor seating. Glatt Kasher Umehadrim. 4 Luntz St. (off Midrachov). Tel. 02-624 3712.

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THE 7TH PLACE - Popular Jerusalem dining spot, authentic Southern Indian and dairy cuisine. Spacious, bright and friendly. Live show every night. Kasher. 37 Hillel St. (Beit Agon - the journalists center). Tel. 02-625 4495.

TROCADERO - New Italian Restaurant and Coffee Shop in the elegant Judea Center at Gush Etzion Junction. Magnificent views. Private Party facilities. Free glass of wine with ad. Open 9 a.m. - midnight & Sat. night. Kasher dairy. Tel. 02-993 4040.

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Tourists attacked at sage's tomb

By DAVID RUDGE

A 70-year-old man and an American woman and her two daughters were attacked and beaten by a group of worshippers when they visited the tomb of the sage Yonatan Ben-Uziel near Safed yesterday - allegedly because they were immodestly dressed.

A police spokesman said three suspects had been detained in connection with the incident.

The woman and her two daughters, tourists from America, had been staying with relatives in Haifa's seaside suburbs, the spokesman said. He said they had decided to visit the grave together with their hosts, the elderly man and his two sons.

"They reached the grave of the sage near Safed. At the same time there was another group of people there, including several young men, from Netanya," he said. "It appears that a number of the young men attacked the group on the grounds that the women were immodestly dressed."

The woman and her daughters required medical treatment, and the elderly man had to be taken to Safed's Rebecca Sieff Hospital.

Police set up roadblocks after receiving a description of the alleged assailants and the bus they boarded after the incident.

PM's cigar budget snuffed out

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN
and JAY BUSHINSKY

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will no longer light up \$30 dollar cigars in his office, nor offer them to his guests. Following a *Yedioth Aharonot* article on Netanyahu's expensive habit, funded by the taxpayer, the Prime Minister's Office announced it was snuffing out the cigar budget and would seek more modest means of refreshment. The report, which raised a storm

of criticism, said the state had been buying Davidoff RR cigars for the prime minister, his close aides and his guests at a monthly budget of close to NIS 12,000, reaching NIS 140,000 a year. Channel 2 News last night reported that the Prime Minister's Office maintained the cost of cigars was NIS 2500 per month. Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak said that cigars were an acceptable hosting expense for a prime ministerial office and such

entertaining was common to previous premiers. Nonetheless, Netanyahu's new bureau chief, Uri Elizur, was asked to look into the matter. He subsequently instructed the Prime Minister's Office's quartermaster to halt the cigar purchases and look into cheaper refreshments for VIPs. The Prime Minister's Office put out a statement yesterday explaining that, "The head of the Prime Minister's Bureau, Uri Elizur, examined the entry regarding outlays for cigars in

the context of hospitality for high-level guests of the prime minister and instructed the provisions department of the Prime Minister's Office to stop purchasing cigars for high-level guests and to serve the prime minister's high-level guests other kinds of treats. "Smoking of cigars was totally unacceptable in former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir's bureau," said Yossi Ahimeir, Shamir's bureau chief from 1988 to 1992. "The greatest indulgence

Shamir occasionally permitted himself with his cup of tea was a cracker," Ahimeir said yesterday. "He would offer them to his guests too. On special occasions, depending on the length of the meetings and the status of the guests, fruit, coffee, mineral water and even burekas might be added. "There is something flaunting and exhibitionist about cigar smoking, a kind of wasteful luxury which should not be paraded before the public. I had no idea a cigar could cost that much.

Perhaps they didn't realize in the present Prime Minister's Office how cigar smoking appears to the outsider, or that they should set an example to the public," Ahimeir added. Shamir was very tight with public money, he recalled. He would put off badly needed office renovations and guests would be offered gifts of Judaica items or books about Israel. Behira Bardugo, former prime minister Shimon Peres's spokeswoman who also worked with for-

mer prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, was astonished to hear the Prime Minister's Bureau would "stop the cigar budget." "What budget? There never was such a budget," she said yesterday. "During Peres and Rabin's terms in office cigars were not served to guests. "Anyway, cigar smoking or offering is very much not 'in' now. You would not see [British Prime Minister] Tony Blair or [US President] Bill Clinton doing it - certainly not in public," Bardugo said.



Beating the heat

Children on holiday enjoy the hot weather - and an ice cream - on a Tel Aviv beach yesterday.

(Gideon Markovitz)

Court grants four 'Ma'atz gang' members a new trial

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

Four men who were tried and sentenced to long prison terms 19 years ago for a series of arsons will be retried, in a historic decision by the Supreme Court.

The four, known as the "Ma'atz gang" - a Hebrew acronym for the "council of young delinquents" - had persistently fought to have their names cleared.

The court decision came after a recommendation for retrial by Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein. It was announced Sunday by Deputy Court President Shlomo Levine. Court President Aharon Barak had earlier absented himself because he had participated in the original 1981 Supreme Court hearing which turned down the gang's appeal against their sentence.

Gideon Harari, Ya'acov Balrot, Uri Gulber, and Yosef Rahamim were arrested in 1978 on suspicion of belonging to the Ma'atz gang, which was charged with setting

fire to a number of businesses, cars, and warehouses in the Dan region. Seven men were put on trial at the time and six were convicted by their own admission. They served between four and 10 years.

But the men insisted that their admissions had been extracted by the police under force. Although they took the case to the Supreme Court, they lost.

The gang members had met while serving in a military prison. Their ring leader, who was acquitted, reportedly said at the time that they had decided to retaliate against the authorities who had jailed them because they came from underprivileged neighborhoods.

The retrial will be heard at a later date by three judges of the Tel Aviv District Court, Levine said. The gang was originally sentenced in that court.

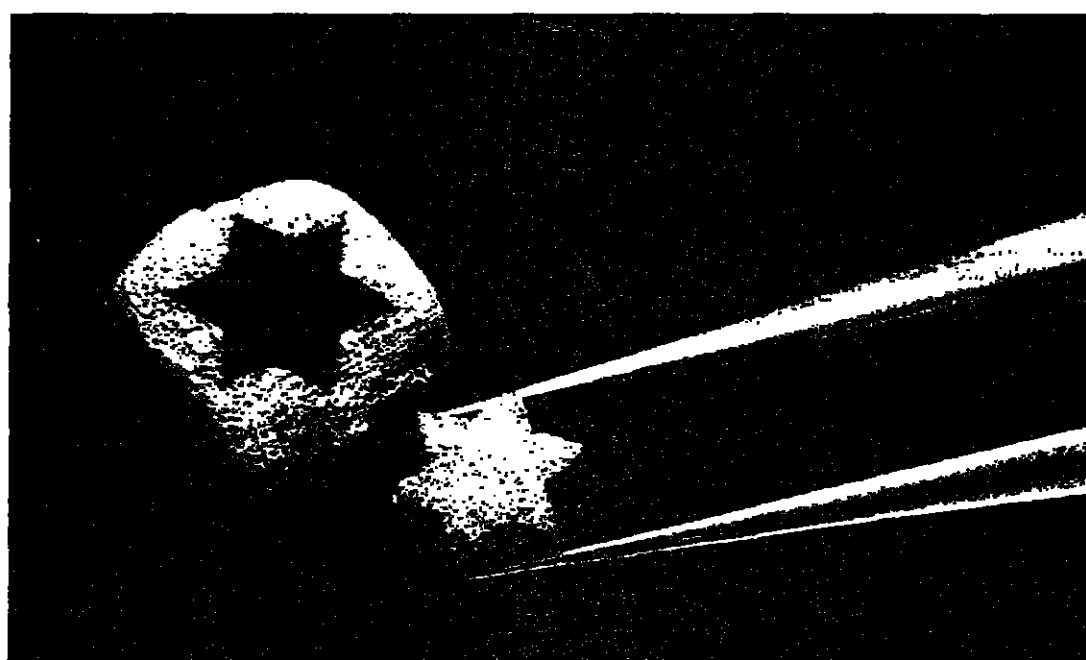
Levine said he was swayed by Rubinstein's recommendation. In his legal opinion, Rubinstein

said he believed two basic conditions existed for a retrial. Firstly, there was new evidence, he said, referring to an admission from one of the interrogators of the gang, former policeman Shai Simhi.

In interviews with the media, Simhi said that the interrogators had indeed used force. They hit the accused and dictated their admissions to them, and he and the other police officers had perjured themselves when they gave false evidence in court, Simhi said. Simhi repeated the allegations under investigation.

Secondly, Rubinstein said, he felt that an injustice had been done.

The Justice Ministry's department for investigating policemen decided to investigate Simhi's allegations, but found that the original files were missing. The other policemen allegedly involved denied Simhi's charges. Nevertheless, Rubinstein recommended a retrial.



A TBADH enzyme which crystallized into a Star of David is viewed through a microscope. (David Harris)

Weizmann researchers find Star of David under their microscopes

By JUDY SIEGEL

A perfectly shaped Star of David only 0.8 millimeters across appeared suddenly under the microscope of researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science. This was not something inspired by Israel's independence jubilee, but a microscopic crystal that had formed spontaneously in the shape of a Magen David.

A team headed by Prof. Yigal

Burstein and Dr. Felix Frolow were working recently on enzymes produced by heat-loving bacteria. They hope that such enzymes may help speed up high-temperature chemical reactions. In order to study the enzymes' properties, they induced them to form crystals, but they had no control over the shape such crystals would take.

For them to grow into a regular, six-pointed star is truly unusual.

Burstein said, but it doesn't grant the enzyme any special properties. "When my student looked into the microscope and cried out that one of our enzymes, TBADH, had crystallized in the form of a Star of David, we were all sure he was joking," the organic chemist said. While not scientifically significant, "the find does make for a great scientific 'souvenir' of Israel's fiftieth birthday," he added.

Moshe Leon: IAI on road to recovery

By STEVE RODAN

Moshe Leon, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, announced that Israel Aircraft Industries Ltd. is on the road to economic recovery and called for greater government efforts to realize the company's potential, executives said yesterday.

The call came as IAI executives reported that the company signed \$475 million worth of contracts in the first quarter of 1998.

The pace of the new contracts is running ahead of IAI's forecast of \$1.75 billion in sales for this year.

In a company statement, Leon, who is responsible for the privatization of government-owned companies, was said to have visited IAI and said he was proud of the profit it recorded in 1997.

"With the presentation of positive financial results in 1997, IAI has ascended to the king's high-

way," he said.

Leon said the government is proud of IAI and "appreciates its contribution to the state and economy and we have to make great efforts to realize the great potential."

"The realization of this potential could bring additional employment to the economy and in increase in Israel's exports."

Leon said he hoped that 1998 would increase IAI's profitability.

The company said it recorded \$30 million in profit in 1997 and predicted that this would rise to \$35 million this year.

Leon met with IAI chairman Avigdor Ben Gal, director-general Moshe Keret, and other top executives. IAI executives did not disclose what they requested from Leon, but have said in the past they are looking for greater government support in promoting exports and more funding for research and development.

Iran begins military exercise in Gulf

TEHERAN (Reuters) - Iran has begun nine days of military exercises in southern Gulf waters with 15,000 troops and three submarines. This is the first time it is operating its three Russian-built submarines together.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted the deputy commander of the first zone of the naval forces of the army, Rear-Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, as saying the "Enehad" (Unity) maneuvers started in the Gulf on Sunday morning.

"He stressed that the aim of the naval exercises ... is to increase the combat-readiness of the naval forces in safeguarding the country's sea borders and testing military equipment," IRNA said.

The agency has said the war games would be carried out in three phases on the ground and under water and would extend from Bandar Abbas in southern Iran to Chahabhar in the southeast.

Iran's navy chief, Rear-Admiral Abbas Mohtaj, told the *Teheran*

Times daily that the use of the three kilo-class diesel submarines made the exercises the first of their kind since Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979.

The war games also will include two frigates, two personnel carrier vessels, two logistics vessels, and teams of frogmen, along with 15,000 naval and air force personnel.

Sayyari said operations would include refueling at sea by night, "controlling and guiding enemy air units, defending against enemy air attacks and electronic war."

At a news conference on Saturday, Mohtaj criticized the US military presence in the Gulf region and said the code name of the exercises indicated Iran's willingness to cooperate with its Gulf Arab neighbors.

Iran's ties with its neighbors often have been tense, in part over differences concerning the presence of Western forces in the Gulf and a dispute with the United Arab Emirates over three Gulf islands.

South African flower for sale in the Golan

By JUDY SIEGEL

Researchers at the Volcani Center for Agricultural Research have managed to grow the exotic protea - South Africa's famous flower - even though the plant is totally unsuited to local conditions. The center in Beit Dagan expects that as a result of its new grafting technique, tourists will come to the Golan and Galilee to pay a fee, cut the flowers and take them home. More than 1,500 dunams, or 25

million blossoms, of protea - colored yellow, orange or reddish-purple - were planted here during the 1997/8 season and exported to Europe, totalling \$4.5 million in sales.

Volcani's Dr. Ya'acov Ben-Ya'acov and Alex Ackerman developed new varieties of the leucadendron protea, previously unknown to the market; they were sold as houseplants or long-life cut flowers. Israel is now the world's largest producer of leucadendrons for

export.

Although Israel is not suited for growing proteas, the researchers used strong rootstocks for grafting in a special technique. This resulted in an abundance of flowers. The 17th-century Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus named the flower after the mythological god of the sea, Proteus, who reputedly changed form many times.

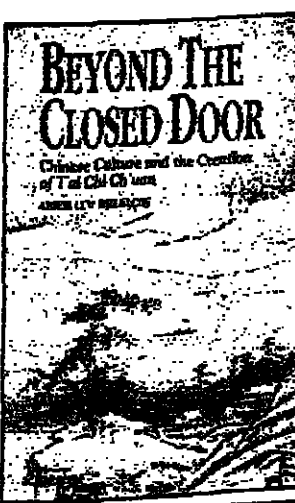
Ben-Ya'acov said that foreign tourists will enjoy coming to cut protea in the North and pay for the

flowers at the gate. Some varieties of the flower also can be grown on the Coastal Plain, he said.

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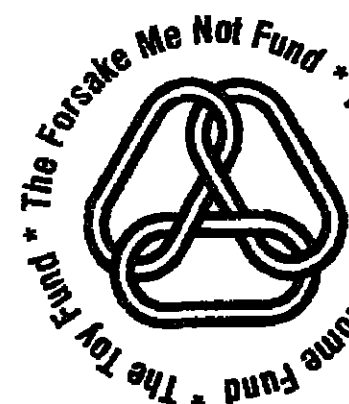
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Vive la paix

Journalists on vacation like to avoid news bulletins, but in Paris, a peace treaty for Ireland was hard to miss.

There are now as many Irish bars and clubs in Paris as in Dublin, and Celtic chic is all the rage. They are run and inhabited by a breed of French-speaking Irish which few of our red-faced Boston-traditionalist exiles would recognize.

The music is Celtic-techno, the managers are young and Euro, their spouses more often Estonians. Dances or Dutch than Dubliners. They don't drink green beer. They love France with uncritical passion.

The Irish diaspora in America, Britain and Australia is well known to the point of tiresome cliché. Ireland's love affair with France has been more discreet (except for the French invasion fleet sent to aid Irish rebels in 1796).

Unlike the love-hate relationship the French have with the English, with the Irish there is no hate. Signs such as those on London lodging houses up to the 1960s - "No Irish" - were never seen in Paris.

France has interesting historical connections to Irish history and the Northern Ireland problem. When the British policy of forced settlements began 300 years ago, France acquired what may be bluntly called the upper crust of Irish exiles, known in Ireland as the Wild Geese.

Make that 800

The northern province of Ulster was chosen for settlement for a good reason - it was the territory of the Irish aristocracy. Those chosen to settle - dour Scottish Presbyterians - were about as different from the Irish Catholic clan warriors of the north as could be imagined, thus ensuring an enmity that survives to this day.

They were fanatically anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, anti-cultural. They were, and are, fiercely loyal to the English crown and later to union with Britain. During Ireland's struggle for independence they scornfully rejected Home Rule as "Rome Rule." During the reporting of this weekend's peace treaty, it seemed few commentators could agree on how long the Irish conflict has lasted - 30, 300, or 800 years.

The history is deeply complex, but the date of Ireland's first struggle with its big neighbor is clear - 1169. Anglo-Norman troops landed at Bannow Bay in County Wexford, the first foreign invader since King Brian Boru drove the Danes from Dublin in 1014 at the cost of his life.

An irony is clear - the new invaders were those same Normans who had invaded and conquered England in 1066. They did become "the British" - but when they arrived in Ireland, they were still mostly French. That's the 800-year mark.

Curse of Cromwell

Two years later, Henry II arrived to receive the submission of the Irish chieftains. The only ones who refused were the high chiefs of Tyrone and Tyrconnell - today's Northern Ireland.

By the time of Henry VIII, the conquerors of Ireland were all but conquered themselves - inter-

married and Gaelicized and "more Irish than the Irish themselves." It was Henry's conversion of England to Protestantism that plunged the knife of religion into the heart of the Irish conflict. The Irish had refused to surrender their language and their Celtic culture. From now on, they also refused to

abandon Irish Catholicism. The O'Neill and O'Donnell clans of the north, aided by Spain, crushed an army of Queen Elizabeth, only to be defeated themselves at the Battle of Kinsale. A French warship spirited Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell out of Ireland in 1607.

The flight of the Wild Geese to France had begun. As the English began packing their settlers into Ulster, the native Irish declared all-out war. Some 12,000 settlers were killed and two O'Neill chieftains smashed a Scottish army at the Battle of Benburb.

But the end was near and its name was Oliver Cromwell, the killer of kings and Catholics. In a new style of warfare later used against American Indians, he ruthlessly massacred city after city in the south of Ireland in 1649. He seized the lands of the rural Irish, banishing them to reservations in the barren Western mountains.

To this day in rural Ireland, wishing someone "the curse of Cromwell" is about as insulting as one can get.

Paris, merci

The last hope of the native Irish came when they rallied to the Catholic King James, who landed in Cork in 1689. But in 1690, 13 courageous Protestant apprentice boys closed the gates of Derry city against James, who was then defeated by William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne. That is the 300-year mark, the decisive victory of the Northern Ireland settlers. More than 14,000 Irish soldiers left for France and joined the armies of Louis XIV. It came as no surprise to the revelers in The Kildare and Kitty O'Shea's in Paris on Saturday that President Jacques Chirac was the first foreign leader to "salute the tireless efforts" that led to the Irish peace accords.

Among all the excited Anglo-Saxon brouhaha of English-speaking Irish, Northern Irish, Americans and Brits, it was nice to be in Paris. It was nice to raise a quiet cognac to the land that quietly took the best of our exiles first, and gave them the best lives of all. Merci, France; vive la paix.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Belfast has a lot to digest

Despite the historic peace agreement, people on both sides of the Irish divide have a long way to go before they truly heal their wounds

By JOHN THOR DAHLBURG

BELFAST - In back-to-back neighborhoods of northern Belfast - staunchly pro-British and Protestant White City and mostly Roman Catholic Whitehall - people are not too sure about the momentous pact signed in their names over the weekend.

They had heard about a new assembly and cross-border bodies and power-sharing. All pretty abstract stuff.

"It's the greatest thing since penicillin," quipped a taxi driver in his 50s.

But these working-class households overlooking the choppy waters of Belfast Lough will have a handier yardstick for gauging whether peace, after 30 years, is in the offing for Northern Ireland.

Earlier this month, the government of the British-ruled province announced that relations between the neighborhoods had gotten so violently hostile that it will spend about \$250,000 to build a six-meter-high wall of metal between them.

So, will the new peace settlement mean that the planned barrier - officially dubbed a "peace line" - will never snake across 200 meters of hillside lawns and flower and vegetable gardens to keep Protestants and Catholics even farther apart? This weekend, residents said they hoped that the wall now does not have to be built - but many added that they believe it will prove necessary whatever the politicians decided.

"You're for peace, but in all the 30 years, people like us have gotten up in the morning, gone to work, and been law-abiding," Carol Smith, 47, a children's nurse "raised in the Protestant tradition," said as she used shears to trim the shrubs and grass in front of her three-bedroom brick duplex.

"Now they're going to let more flipping terrorists out on the street. And it's never going to stop."

Down the road, Geraldine Leckey, 51, a housewife and grandmother, was fielding customer calls at the Quick Cabs taxi stand as children came out of the corner grocery gobbling Easter candy.

"We Catholic people here have never been anything but second-class people - jobs, housing, rights," Leckey said. "I haven't seen anything in this agreement that truly will make us true equals."

Throughout Northern Ireland, people have been asking themselves and others what the agreement reached Friday by eight political parties and the British and Irish governments means for them and their future.

Skepticism is wrestling with optimism. People remember dashed hopes in the past. Others are daring to hope again. Plenty are simply confused and seeking fuller information in newspapers and from television and radio.

"I believe for the first time that this could be it - once the hothouses have sense and put down their guns," retiree Theresa McCarron told a local reporter who went to canvass the militantly nationalist Falls Road neighborhood of Belfast, where Irish tricolors fluttered Saturday in a cold wind that intermittently carried April snowflakes. "I would appeal to them



News of the historic peace agreement was on the minds of worshippers like these two girls, who prayed at the St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Lower Falls, Belfast, on Easter Sunday. Some residents voiced suspicions that at the end of the day the deal will boil down to little more than 'flipping terrorists out on the street.'

to give peace a try. They might even like it."

But neighbor Bernadette McMenery, whose son survived a gunshot wound to the head, making her one of the hundreds of residents of "the Falls," whose husband, children or friends have been killed or wounded in the past 30 years of violence, was dubious.

"We've been told before that there was peace, and all you have to do is turn on the news and hear that another has been shot," she said.

People here will be asked in six weeks in a referendum whether they approve or reject the proposed settlement.

On Saturday, the 110-member Executive Committee of Northern Ireland's largest party, David Trimble's pro-British Ulster Unionists, voted to support it after a bitter, five-hour session. Opponents denounced the deal as a sell-out to the Irish Republican Army.

At least half of the party's 10 members in the British Parliament object to key clauses of the historic compromise: early releases for IRA prisoners; a role for the IRA's political wing, the Sinn Féin party, in a proposed new provincial assembly; and requirements that this new administration cooperate in a North-South

ministerial council with the Irish Republic.

"This agreement is a disaster for unionism [keeping Northern Ireland a part of Great Britain]," William Thompson, one of the dissenting lawmakers, charged. "It can never be accepted."

A grass-roots rebellion in the Protestant majority destroyed the only other formal attempt here at sharing power with minority Catholics in 1974. So in the weeks before the referendum, proponents of this new, and much more ambitious, settlement will be trying to persuade Protestant and Catholic, pro-British or proponents of a single Irish nation, that a deal with something to displease just about everyone is, on the whole, worth it.

"If this brings peace, then that is the main thing," said Neill Edgar, 27, who sells French fries in Belfast's Sandy Road quarter, where lampposts and curbstones are painted in the red, white and blue colors of the Union Jack. "But no one is celebrating here yet."

Speaking in support of the proposal in Washington, President Clinton vowed on Saturday that the United States will continue its drive to end the sectarian violence. Clinton, who spoke by telephone with key partic-

ipants in the peace talks to help overcome last-minute sticking points, said it was appropriate that the breakthrough came as Christians celebrate Easter and Jews observe Pesach.

"In the last analysis, the future of that region lies in the hearts and hands of its people," Clinton said in his weekly radio address, adding that he hoped there will be "a future rich with the light of Irish laughter, not the pain of bitter tears."

A reporter for the *Independent* newspaper of London who went to Portadown, a fiercely unionist and 73 percent Protestant town halfway between Dublin and the Irish border, found even a formal agreement will not be enough to placate some after years of strife and centuries of polarization along religious lines.

At a local pub, the journalist asked what would happen if a Catholic were to enter.

"He wouldn't be walking out of here," one patron said.

And after a peace accord?

"He wouldn't be walking out of here."

Troubles between White City, 200 households, and Whitehall, more than three times that, began three years ago. On this sloping hillside about five kilometers from the ship-

yard where the ill-fated liner *Titanic* was built, bands of marauding youths now regularly attack each other. Rocks and gasoline bombs have been tossed into houses.

"You get a hundred of them coming up the road, and a hundred of them from the estate up above, and I'm in the middle," said Carol Smith. "If I complain, I get a petrol bomb through the window at night."

In both enclaves of tidy bungalows, duplexes and row houses, the "for sale" signs have gone up. There are few takers.

On April 1, authorities reported 300 "incidents," the vast majority sectarian, since January 1997. Adam Ingram, the province's security minister, said the "pressing need to maintain the safety of both communities" will result in the construction of Belfast's first major stretch of "security fencing" separating Protestants and Catholics since September 1994.

"It is my strong belief that political agreement will help us find ways of reducing sectarianism, and the fear caused by it," Ingram said in his announcement.

But, he added, "this will not be easily achieved and may not happen as quickly as all of us wish."

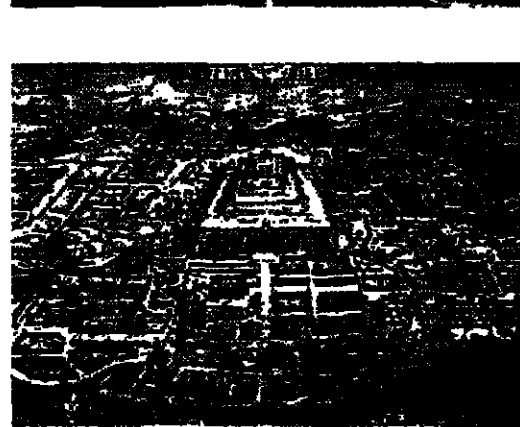
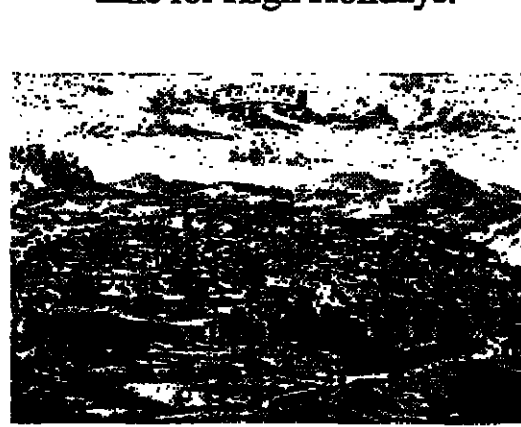
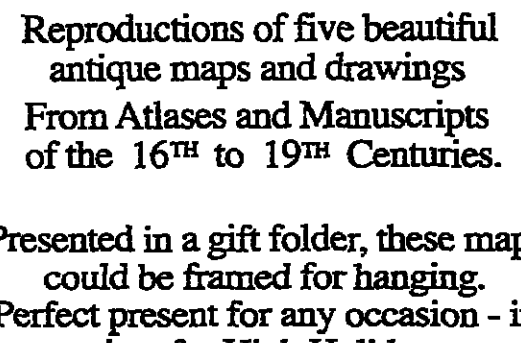
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DRIVE
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Yeltsin, Duma stalemated on PM

By TIMOTHY HERZAGE

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Boris Yeltsin stood firm yesterday over his choice of Sergei Kiriyenko as prime minister, but hinted he might compromise by naming some ministers proposed by the opposition.

At the risk of a showdown which would force him to dissolve the State Duma lower house, Yeltsin said he would not withdraw Kiriyenko's candidacy for a second and possibly third vote, even though the chamber rejected the former banker on Friday.

"I say again - I have no other candidate. I will not put forward another candidate," Yeltsin told Russian reporters before talks with border guards chief Nikolai Bordyuzha.

But the 67-year-old president signaled he might be ready to compromise over other issues to avoid dissolving the opposition-dominated Duma and calling a parliamentary election about 18 months ahead of schedule.

He said he would meet the Duma's Communist speaker, Gennady Seleznyov, for consultations today and made clear he was considering opposition proposals over the government line-up.

Yeltsin has already ruled out a

full coalition government, proposed by the Communists, the main opposition party.

Yeltsin has mixed tough talk and offers of compromise since he sacked his entire government on March 23 and ran into opposition over his choice of Kiriyenko to inject more vigor into market reforms.

Many deputies in the Duma say 35-year-old Kiriyenko, the energy minister in the last cabinet, is too inexperienced to fill the role of Russia's constitutional No. 2.

Only 143 deputies backed his candidacy in last Friday's vote and his chances of gaining the 226 votes needed for success are unclear in the second vote due by the end of this week.

A third vote would follow if he were rejected a second time. Under the constitution, the prime minister would stand in for the president if the head of state were incapacitated and would gain control of the trigger to Russia's nuclear arsenal.

Yeltsin said yesterday he would not accept proposals to change the constitution to make the leader of parliament's upper house of parliament Russia's number two instead.

"Firstly, this is illogical and secondly there will be no changes in the constitution as long as I am the president," Tass quoted Yeltsin as saying.

Yeltsin was due to meet Kiriyenko later yesterday to map out their next steps in the battle with the Duma.

Yeltsin said on Friday each day without a prime minister was a blow to Russia's economy.



Boris Yeltsin (AP)



Sergei Kiriyenko (AP)

Khatami warns public not to stage demonstrations for mayor

By BARRY MAY

TEHRAN (Reuters) - President Mohammed Khatami and his cabinet have urged calm and warned against public rallies in support of the imprisoned mayor of Tehran, who has become the focus of a power struggle between conservatives and moderates in Iran.

At the same time, the embattled mayor's lawyer said his client, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, had been denied right of counsel.

Parliament is due to meet in a closed unofficial session today to discuss the situation, the hard-line conservative newspaper *Jomhuri Eslami* said yesterday.

Karbaschi, who was instrumental in Khatami's landslide election victory over conservative opponents last May, was detained on April 4 on graft charges. Iran's conservative-led judiciary has

charged the mayor with embezzlement, misappropriation of funds and mismanagement.

Karbaschi's supporters say the charges and his detention were politically motivated - a claim rejected by the judiciary.

Lawyer Bahman Keshavarz, in remarks reported by the official Islamic Republic News Agency, said he had been retained to defend the mayor but had been denied a meeting with him.

Interior Minister Abdullah Nouri was reported on Sunday to have issued a permit for students to hold a rally outside Tehran University today in support of the mayor, who has won popularity for a series of projects over the past eight years designed to improve life in the teeming Iranian capital.

But Khatami's cabinet, evidently fearing street clashes, called on the people not to hold rallies or

demonstrations in Karbaschi's support.

In a statement broadcast on state-run television after a meeting chaired by the president on Sunday, the cabinet said the call was in the interest of "sustaining peace and tranquillity in the society."

"Considering the sensitivity of the issue and the situation of the people, the problem would be resolved quickly," it said.

The statement also expressed regret that despite the guidance of Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, no proper action had been taken. Khamenei, the supreme political authority in Iran, intervened last week in the growing crisis over Karbaschi's imprisonment, ordering the heads of the executive, judiciary and legislative branches to coordinate efforts to defuse the crisis.

Khatami, his predecessor Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, judiciary

chief Ayatollah Mohammed Yazdi and Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri conferred on Saturday night.

Karbaschi's arrest brought into the open a clash between conservatives defeated in the presidential election - chiefly Nateq-Nouri - and Khatami's moderate backers.

Jomhuri Eslami said that if the enemies of the revolution and the country wished to put the two factions in conflict and damage the system they could not have done better.

"Our society cannot stand tension and excitement. It is better for the wise men of both factions to make their followers understand this explicitly," it said.

Farda, another conservative daily, said: "Mr. President, you enjoy the most popular support that has ever existed in our revolution because you support the rule of law. But the actions taken by some of your cabinet ministers

could be considered as your own opinion and this is a pity."

"It is essential that the cabinet members, particularly the interior minister, follow the general stance of the government."

Iran Daily, an English-language newspaper published by IRNA, paid tribute to Karbaschi.

"All things considered, the mayor and his staff have done a unique job," it said in an editorial. "Today's Tehran is the envy of urban planners, experts and municipal authorities in far away places, and the most important thing is that the municipality has managed to give Tehran the unprecedented face-lift without state budgeting. It started generating its own funds since the early 1990s through taxes and tariffs."

It cautioned the judiciary that "its recklessness is harming the nation's political and social fabric."

Embassies abandon smog-choked Brunei

By JOCELYN GECKER

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei (AP) - The US Embassy in Brunei has requested permission from Washington to evacuate its staff from the smog-choked capital to temporarily escape hazardous air pollution.

Parliament is due to meet in a closed unofficial session today to discuss the situation, the hard-line conservative newspaper *Jomhuri Eslami* said yesterday.

As the haze in this oil-rich kingdom on northern Borneo island remains at critical levels, foreign embassies have filed travel alerts and begun to grant staff "rest and relaxation" on a rotating basis, embassy officials said.

"We're waiting for State

Department approval," said Reese, to fly staff to Australia or the US.

In mid-March, the US Embassy filed a travel alert, advising some 200 Americans in Brunei not to go outside and to wear protective masks if they must go outdoors. The statement cautioned travelers to Brunei to be aware of the "hazardous" air pollution levels.

The international airport has often been forced to shut down. All incoming flights and short, outgoing flights were canceled yesterday morning. Visibility at 2 p.m. stood at 160 meters, down from 190 meters at 7 a.m.

Fires in Brunei and in nearby Malaysian sections of Borneo have cast blankets of smoke over the island. An eye-and-throat-stinging smog has sent thousands to hospital emergency rooms with complaints of asthma-like symptoms.

Students at the Brunei International School have had no recess or outdoor sports since January, when the pollution levels climbed to hazardous levels. They strap on pollution masks when walking through the school's outdoor hallways.

"This is a vision of the future if we don't get control," said the

school's principal Mark Gifford, as a line of masked third-graders filed past him.

Last month the government shut schools for two weeks. Schools reopened April 9, but parents have been advised to keep children home when the pollution index exceeds healthy levels.

Attendance at the international school has dropped by half to 400 students, and the teaching staff has dwindled to 70 from 100 in recent weeks, said Gifford.

"There will come a point where we have insufficient staff to continue operating," said Gifford, adding that the school is looking

into buying its own pollution reading equipment since the government's machines do not register readings higher than 500.

In Brunei's Pollutant Standard Index, a reading above 200 is considered "very unhealthy," above 300 "hazardous," and above 400 "very hazardous." Reports in the local Borneo Bulletin, which runs a daily list of PSI's around the country, put Sunday's index at 500.

Othman Jailani, a spokesman for Brunei's fire department, estimated the fires have blackened 9,880 acres of the nation's rain forest.



Taking shelter

Storks try to take shelter from the snow in a park in Strasbourg yesterday. Heavy snowfalls in eastern France over the weekend left several thousand people without electricity for hours. (AP)

Pol Pot search moves to mountains

ANLONG VENG, Cambodia (Reuters) - Cambodian government forces and Khmer Rouge defectors moved into mountains in the north yesterday in their search for infamous former guerrilla chief Pol Pot and the crippled rebel group's current leaders.

The deputy armed forces chief said more than 3,000 Khmer Rouge fighters had defected to the government in recent weeks but the exact whereabouts of Pol Pot, responsible for the deaths of more than a million Cambodians during his 1975-79 "killing fields" rule, was unknown.

Government forces and Khmer Rouge defectors were closing in on an area on the Dongrek escarpment, which forms Cambodia's northern border with Thailand, where Pol Pot and the remnants of the rebel group were believed to be holed up, commanders in Anlong Veng said.

Anlong Veng was the Khmer Rouge "capital" until late March, when the rebels began to mutiny against their leaders and join the government.

Pol Pot, now in his 70s and known to be in poor health, was purged by his comrades and sentenced to life under house arrest last year after he lost a power struggle with Khmer Rouge military chief Ta Mok. That struggle was sparked by attempts by then-copremier, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, to strike a ceasefire with the rebels.

Pol Pot, Ta Mok and other Khmer Rouge leaders were believed to be somewhere on the Dongrek escarpment, deputy

armed forces chief of staff General Meas Sophea told reporters.

"I believe Pol Pot and Ta Mok are together," he said.

Meas Sophea said he could not confirm reports that Pol Pot had slipped across the border into Thailand or that he had already been seized by defectors.

A Thai military officer on the border said Pol Pot was still in Cambodia.

Anlong Veng was quiet and largely deserted yesterday. One government truck-mounted BM-21 multiple rocket launcher was on the edge of the town.

Intermittent explosions could be heard from the north as a government tank fired into an area of the Dongrek escarpment known as Mountain 200, about three km. from the Thai border.

"We're firing to scare them [the

Khmer Rouge] away," Meas Sophea said.

Meas Sophea said the number of guerrillas who had switched to the government side in recent weeks was now 3,100, leaving Ta Mok with fewer than 200 loyalists.

Meas Sophea and other commanders, including Minister of Defense Tea Banh, have predicted the imminent collapse of the Khmer Rouge.

Far-right clouds Austria poll

By RICHARD MURPHY

VIENNA (Reuters) - The man attracting the most attention in Austria's low-key presidential election campaign is not even running for office.

Far-right firebrand Joerg Haider, leader of the Freedom Party, has polarized Austrian politics so much that the two liberal candidates for the largely ceremonial office have declared they will never make him head of government.

The two conservative candidates, including incumbent Thomas Klestil, responded they would respect the will of the electorate in future parliamentary elections, even if this means appointing the controversial Haider as chancellor.

For four of the five contenders, the question looks almost certain to remain academic.

Opinion polls show Klestil, 65, a former diplomat, is the clear favorite to win a second six-year term in next Sunday's election.

Austrians are likely to reward him for restoring their country's international image, which was tarnished by allegations about the role of his predecessor Kurt Waldheim in the army of the Third Reich.

Waldheim was ostracized by western leaders and refused admission to the US.

"Unless Thomas Klestil makes a serious mistake, he will be elected with a comfortable majority in the first round," *Der Standard* newspaper commented.

Klestil, who ran for the conservative People's Party in 1992, is standing as an independent this time, saying he has demonstrated he can be "the president of all Austrians."

"I am concerned above all with stability and continuity and with confronting the enormous challenges our country faces as a result of the great spiritual, social and political changes taking place in Europe and the world," he said at his opening rally, a sedate affair in a Vienna palace.

Klestil has refused to debate with his rivals and looks uncomfortable at his rare campaign appearances, giving the impression he would rather be reappointed by acclamation rather than submit to the vulgar business of an election.

He has the backing of the People's Party and of Haider, who described him as "the most suitable of all the candidates."

Chancellor Viktor Klima's Social Democrats, senior partner in a fractious grand coalition with the People's Party, did not nominate a candidate of their own and

are not officially backing anyone.

But Klestil's declaration that the Freedom Party, the main opposition group in parliament, is a democratic body which should not be excluded from high office angered many Social Democrats.

Haider favors strict curbs on immigration, wants the introduction of a single European currency delayed, and opposes the enlargement of the European Union to include the former communist countries of central and eastern Europe.

He was forced to resign as provincial governor of Carinthia in 1991 after praising the Hitler's labor policies.

But Haider's party is the third largest in parliament, winning 22 percent of the vote in December 1995 elections, and his approval rating in polls has been as high as 38 percent.

This raises the possibility that the next national election, due in 1999, could produce a coalition between the Freedom Party and the People's Party.

The campaign has been a lackluster affair, enlivened briefly only by the late entry of Lutheran bishop Gertraud Knoll - who has kept appearances to a minimum so she can continue to breast-feed her six-month-old son - and a minor scandal about Klestil's civil service pension.

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What's in a name?

CESKE BUDEJOVICE. Czech Republic — Back when men were men, beer was the color of molasses, and mugs were made of stoneware or pewter, someone in the Bohemian town of Pilsen found a way to make yeast sink harmlessly to the bottom of the fermentation vat.

Thus was born the world's first pole lager, a chic new drink that was to launch a thousand clear-glass schooners. Pilsener, first produced in the 1840s, should have made its hometown rich, but by the time anyone in Bohemia thought to license the name, the dry horse was out of the barn.

Brewers here in Ceske Budejovice, another Bohemian mountain city renowned for its beer, are determined not to let that happen to them.

In the days when the region of Bohemia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, people here spoke German and this town's name was Budweis. There was a local brewery, and the output was, sensibly enough, called Budweis.

"You had cognac made in the province of Cognac and champagne made in Champagne," points out Petr Jansky, financial manager of the Budejovický Budvar brewery.

For him, logic is logic: Even though the empire is long gone and the city's name has reverted to the original Czech, the beer from here is still Budweis. And only the beer from here.

Now, in a David-and-Goliath routine par excellence, the small, state-owned Budejovický Budvar brewery is duking it out with Missouri's Anheuser-Busch Cos., in courts all across Europe, claiming the right to reserve the names "Budweiser" and "Bud" for its brew, in much the same way the French have so jealously — and lucratively — reserved the name "Champagne" for their top-franc sparkling wines.

"This is something Americans should understand," Jansky says, "for it is in the tradition of your great country to have a brave and capable little company fighting against a big opponent."

Mighty Anheuser-Busch — which controls 45 percent of the US beer market and 8.5% of the world market, with sales in more than 80 countries — says the dispute poses no threat to its finances, growth or international marketing strategy. Its advertising budget alone is bigger than Budejovický Budvar's entire annual revenues.

But Bud vs. Bud can certainly

cause confusion for the beer drinkers of Europe. With the matter before trial and appellate courts in more than 20 countries, it's impossible to belly up to a bar anywhere on this continent and know, with confidence, which Bud's for you.

Demand a Bud in Switzerland and you're apt to be handed a frosty glass of the Czech version; a lower court ruled in December that Anheuser-Busch could no longer sell its flagship beer there under that name. In Denmark, by contrast, calling for a Budweiser will get you the lighter American stuff, thanks to a December injunction prohibiting the Czechs from including that word on their labels in Denmark.

In the Czech Republic, calling for a Bud will get you the domestic brew. But in Britain, a drinker who orders Budweiser has no way of knowing what he'll get, because her majesty's courts have agreed to let the two names coexist.

The British Trade Marks Registry office does permit Anheuser-Busch the exclusive use of the slogan "King of Beers" even though Budejovický Budvar likes to call its Budweiser the "Beer of Kings." In Germany, the jewel in the

European beer marketer's crown, use of the word "Bud" is still under adjudication. But while the judges deliberate, Budejovický Budvar has been free to use "Budweiser," and it has blossomed into the third-largest import. Anheuser-Busch is meanwhile striving to close the gap with a beer labeled, simply, B.

These courtroom battles are but the latest phase in a dispute that goes back more than a century. World wars have been fought, the Iron Curtain has been thrown up and dismantled, breweries have been bombed, occupied and nationalized — and, still, Bud vs. Bud marches on.

Seen from America, Bud vs. Bud is a nifty compendium of the fundamentals of Marketing 101: the incalculable value of bringing to life an "icon" brand and the need to defend it to the death.

But here in the cradle of Bohemian brewing, the case is seen as a dark study in the way America steals other people's cultural props and mass-commercializes all the charm away.

"Anheuser-Busch will never be able to make the Budweiser trademark into another big brand like Marlboro or Coca-Cola in these

parts," says Jansky, "because they are really impostors." "These are two different products, enjoyed by two different groups of people," Steve Burrows, president and chief operating officer of Anheuser-Busch International Inc., said.

The story dates to the middle of the last century, when American brewer Adolphus Busch, a German immigrant, scouted Europe hoping to crack the secrets of the popular new lager-making technique pioneered in the Bavarian Alps. He made his way to Budweis and was impressed enough by the goings-on there to name his own beer Budweiser.

Unlike the hapless brew-meisters of Pilsen, Busch had the foresight to license the name in America in 1876 — and subsequently around the world.

Nineteen years later, Budejovický Budvar fired up its copper kettles. And a few years after that, it began shipping small amounts of Budweiser to the United States, prompting Anheuser-Busch to seize the legal high ground and cry trademark infringement.

In 1911, the two Bud-meisters reached a truce. Budejovický Budvar would use the name Budweiser in Europe, while

Anheuser-Busch was free to do business with it in the rest of the world.

But the deal cracked, and by the time World War II broke out, it was history.

In any case, the two brewers entered the postwar 1940s with a new deal, in which Anheuser-Busch got the rights to America and Latin America and Budejovický Budvar got the rights to Europe and the Soviet Bloc.

This arrangement, too, cramped the parties, but then down came the Berlin Wall.

The once-closed East European borders — and markets — were thrown open to the West. The newly democratic Czechoslovakia started selling off thousands of state enterprises to private investors.

It looked like a rare opportunity for the two Budweisers to kiss and make up. A moratorium on lawsuits was agreed upon. Negotiations began for Anheuser-Busch to buy a stake in Budejovický Budvar, providing needed capital in exchange for control of the name Budweiser.

Anheuser-Busch has never said how much the trademark settlement deal was worth, but Budejovický Budvar executives claim the

American brewery offered a package worth \$232 million. Negotiations broke down in 1996. "Anheuser-Busch would be happy if the name of our city, in Czech and German, disappeared from the map, along with the 700-year-old tradition of Budejovický beer," alleges Budejovický Budvar Chief Executive Jiri Bockel.

Burrows calls allegations that his company wants to wipe Ceske Budejovice off the map "silly." "You have to protect your trademark, because if you don't defend it, you're perceived as abandoning it," he says, and given the course of intellectual-property jurisprudence around the world, that is indeed so.

But here in Ceske Budejovice, Jansky says he won't give up either.

The so-called appellation-of-origin laws that control the use of names like "Champagne" have been upheld by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and its successor, the World Trade Organization, he says, suggesting that Anheuser-Busch rename its beer after something other than his hometown. "If Anheuser-Busch wants producing 'St. Louis Beer,' we will not fight them on that," he says.

LA Times

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NEGEV

An exciting new generation of pop

Who killed Bobby Fuller?

By ROGER CATLIN

You know the song. Driving and defiant, a pinnacle of rock's most exuberant era, "I Fought the Law" sounds as fresh today as it did in 1966. And the Bobby Fuller Four, which made it a hit, seemed the likely candidate to pass the sprightly Buddy Holly torch to the next generation of roots rockers, to Creedence Clearwater Revival and beyond.

But one of the most promising figures in rock 'n' roll also had one of the most mysterious ends.

Three months after "I Fought the Law" stormed the Top 10, Bobby Fuller was found dead in his mother's car, bones broken, with bruises, and gasoline poured all over him. The coroner ruled it suicide, despite evidence to the contrary. He was 22.

The mystery lingers decades later, just as Fuller's musical legacy endures. The Clash, John Mellencamp and others have all covered his songs. Boxed sets continue to be issued covering not only studio material but also live club shows back when the Los Angeles band was based in the band members' El Paso, Texas, hometown.

The tragedy was the basis for the 1983 film *Eddie and the Cruisers* and caused the band Black 47 to declare on a 1994 album, "I just gotta know: Who killed Bobby Fuller?"

That was the subject, too, of a panel discussion at the South by Southwest music conference in Austin, Texas, last month, where fans, writers and surviving members of the Bobby Fuller Four took up the cause, which also has been the basis of an *Unsolved Mysteries* TV episode.

The mystery lingers in part because the songs stand up. "They were one of the great rock 'n' roll bands," says rocker Marshall Crenshaw, who has played a similar brand of power pop since the '80s. "They did what they did with so much conviction and energy. Those guys really knew what Fender guitars were for."

"You don't hear that type of music these days," says Randy Fuller, Bobby Fuller's brother, who was bass player in the band, which unabashedly carried the torch of fellow West Texan Buddy Holly, who died in 1959. Holly also had influenced the Beatles, though, who were on a British invasion that nearly wiped out American music at the time.

"It was terrible," Randy Fuller said. Still, "I Fought the Law" proved that even amid Beatlemania, a striking chord

could ring for American rock 'n' roll.

Certainly, Bobby Fuller's greatest music seemed ahead of him - before, that is, he was found in a closed car the steamy afternoon of July 18, 1966, in the parking lot of the Hollywood, California, apartment he shared with his mother.

Despite many strange aspects to the death, Randy Fuller said police "didn't take any tests or fingerprints or anything like that."

And counter to the ruling of suicide, Bobby Fuller hadn't been acting like a man who wanted to take his life, his brother added. He had made arrangements that day to buy a Corvette and had immediate plans for the band. "We were going to have a meeting the next day, about some changes. He was thinking of going solo," Randy Fuller said.

So who killed Bobby Fuller? "We used to say the Beatles did it," said Boyd Elder, a graphic artist who hung out with the band at the time. A more serious suspicion surrounded Bob Keane, the founder of Del-Fi Records, who regularly fought with Fuller on production and direction of the band. "They had conflicts all the time," Randy Fuller says. "Because (Bobby) was a hell of a producer and was producing us a long time before Bob Keane got involved." There was even speculation that Fuller was ready to jump over to record with famous '60s Wall of Sound producer Phil Spector, who had prominently showed up at a Bobby Fuller Four gig one night in Los Angeles and sat in on keyboards.

More likely was the simple jealousy in the boyfriend of a lovesick fan.

If someone killed Fuller to cash in on an inflated insurance policy, as some claim a Del-Fi associate did, he wouldn't have cashed in, since the death was ruled a suicide. Drugs were starting to surface in Southern California, but they weren't of interest to Fuller, Elder said. "He wasn't into drugs, and he wasn't into drugs."

Miriam Linna, the editor of *Kicks* magazine, who has been anthologizing the Bobby Fuller Four's El Paso material for her Norton Records label, has done her share of research on the death. "Lots of people are afraid to say things," she said.

"I've had a couple of conversations with people who start out saying they know a lot about it," Crenshaw said. "But at some point in the discussion they just have to stop. Presumably whatever it is they have in their heads is just too scary to say out loud."

(The Hartford Courant)



Beneath the grunge exterior of Smashing Pumpkin James Iha, lies the heart of a sensitive songwriter.

In Tune

By David Brinn

DESIRELESS
Eagle-Eye Cherry
(Helicon)

LET IT COME DOWN
James Iha
(Helicon)

KUMA
Reva L'Sheva
(Noam)

Who would have thought that two of the finest singer-songwriter debuts so far this year would come from someone with a famous name and someone who plays in a famous band?

Eagle-Eye Cherry's musical credentials are gold - the son of late jazz great Don Cherry and the brother of sassy soulstress Neneh Cherry. But that would never prepare the listener for the sheer excellence of the material, which ranges from pumping acoustic-based rock to rhythm-inflected R&B.

His father's wanderings brought the young Cherry to Europe, and he eventually settled in Stockholm, where *Desireless* became a huge success last year. This prompted the release of the disc in the rest of Europe.

"Save Tonight" is a classic radio hit, already raising eyebrows on these shores with its engaging Counting Crows accessibility. But that's only the tip of the iceberg. Almost every track has some standout element which screams our authenticity and originality.

The accomplished lyrics and intricacy of the arrangements belie the relative youth of its author. Cherry makes it all sound fresh, exciting and full of inspiration. He possesses the effortless soul of Marvin Gaye and Al Green and matches it with brilliant pop songcraft and '90s urban street

smarts. And on the final track, he lets loose on some improvisational work that remind us who his father is. With *Desireless*, Cherry has definitely focused his eagle eyes on his target.

MORE derivative, but certainly no less engaging, is the debut effort of *Smashing Pumpkins* guitarist James Iha. Don't expect a distorted guitar-fest channeled through Marshall amps that has become the Pumpkins' trademark. Beneath the grunge exterior lies the heart of a sensitive songwriter with a penchant for introspective odes that would make Jackson Browne blush.

But Iha capitalizes on his grasp of pop aesthetics and sounds like he's having the time of his life in his home studio creating an intoxicating sonic collage. The sentimental, touchy-feely lyrics are awash with a broad

palette consisting of shimmering layers of acoustic and electric guitars, a solid rock beat and gorgeous harmonies.

Imagine Crosby, Stills & Nash backed by a classic pop band like Badfinger on an all-1970s radio hit weekend. Occasional country-rock influences also emerge, reminiscent of Gram Parsons or *Harvest*-era Neil Young. Over the course of 11 songs, Iha's songwriting doesn't hold particularly well, but here it's a case of the irresistible sound beating out the ordinary material.

When *The Smashing Pumpkins* eventually self-destruct, Iha, with a little more emphasis on his songs, will easily find his niche as his generation's James Taylor.

ZANY is the only word to describe Squirrel Nut Zippers. Busting out of that alternative haven of "Chapel Hill, North

Carolina, the septet attacks big band jazz with rock & roll irreverence and exuberance. It's the kind of music you would expect to hear in the background of old Betty Boop cartoons, but accelerated to a fervid pace.

Featuring sax, clarinet, string bass, banjo, violin and ukulele, the band calls their output "hot" music and one listen will explain why. A profound New Orleans influence pervades their second album, appropriately titled *Hot*. It sounds like it was recorded in a smoky club during Prohibition.

Not for every taste, Squirrel Nut Zippers remind us why they call it the devil's music.

FROM THE DEVIL'S music to the music of the Lord, the sophomore release by local "spiritual rockers" Reva L'Sheva, *Kuma*, is a giant leap forward for the band. Combining keen pop sensibili-

ties with traditional Jewish themes may seem a jarring thought to those who like their music and religion separate. But the quintet of transplanted Anglos and native Israelis accomplish the task seamlessly.

On *Kuma*, the individual songwriting talent of the band members begin to emerge, with guitarist David Ambrosion particularly shining on "Lonely Friday" and "In Your Soul" which, lyrics aside, are dead ringers for Shalom Hanoch at his best.

The band smokes on the bluesy shuffle "Hashem Oz" and it cops a funky David Bowie-inspired "Farne" riff on "Welcome the Angels."

The chances of Reva L'Sheva closing the religious-secular gap with its inspiring and danceable message is slim, but Aviv Geffen could do far worse than picking up on some of these tunes.

Itoh: The naked and the 'Dead'

DANCE REVIEW

In the corner of the dimly lit stage we see Japanese dancer Kim Itoh slouched on a table. Then, hesitantly, he feels the air around him with his hands, the way a turtle would check the weather. A moment later, he turns and moves erratically on all fours on top of the table, scratching it

WORKS BY KIM ITOH
Noga Theater
Jaffa
April 9

with his nails, chewing the edges with his teeth like a giant rodent. Kim Itoh invents for himself and for his dancers a new dance field that is a fusion of Butoh, contem-



Kim Itoh

porary dance theater and mime. As a performer, he cuts an intriguing figure with his unique face, his bald head and the black eye patch. His dancers, particularly Makoto Enda and Tsuyoshi

Shirai, are impressive, conveying the ambivalent sexuality inherent in the *Kabuki* - the Japanese traditional theater - and the juxtaposition of brutality and refinement of Japanese life.

In *Dead and Alive*, Itoh's more abstract and more spiritual work, he sends three dancers on stage, totally naked, grouped together as if they came out of a 16th-century painting depicting the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. Through the rest of the work they rotate in one place like sculptures on a turning wheel.

Then, as the music (Maurice Ravel's) soars, they groan and convulse, holding their private parts.

Good god, you think, was Itoh putting us on? I suspect not, because in several other scenes, Itoh makes his point in a rather crude way, thus gaining some giggles from the audience but losing his credibility.

Lisa Loeb: Not just a one-hit wonder

By TAMARA KENBERG

Singer, songwriter and musician Lisa Loeb had her first hit single before she even recorded her first album. "It was a mixed blessing," says Loeb, who has just released her second album, *Firecracker*.

The hit single in question, "Stay," first released on the soundtrack for the 1994 film *Reality Bites*, propelled Loeb into the spotlight. "I had written it without entertainment-industry interference."

But with the single's success came tour dates and a slew of marketing responsibilities that did not allow Loeb time to get to work on her first album for nearly a year.

In 1995, she released *Tails*, which included "Stay" and other songs that stretched Loeb's image beyond that of the *Reality Bites* girl. And now, *Firecracker*'s literate and

loosely structured hybrids of folk and pop, delivered in her patented power-waltz style, add even more dimension to her musical catalog.

Tails and *Firecracker* gave Loeb the opportunity to stay true to and expand on the acoustic guitar and singer-songwriting styles she embraced while at Brown University.

"People associated me completely with that 'Stay,'" Loeb says. "I had to deal with that image and having friends looking at me and going, 'You're selling out.'"

Through extensive touring, she's cracked that potential stereotype. And she has forged relationships with her female contemporaries. "Our music is played more, which is exciting," Loeb says. "You can put more than one woman on a bill."

And you can be known for more than one hit single. (The Baltimore Sun)

Pathos and a penchant for drama from Uruguay

CONCERT ROUNDUP

By URY EPPSTEIN

A large stage crowded with choristers producing masses of sound and obviously having a good time doing so is a thoroughly enjoyable sight. This is what happened with the Jerusalem Oratorio Choir in a performance

JERUSALEM ORATORIO CHOIR
Works by Bach and Mendelssohn
Jerusalem Theater, March 31

of Mendelssohn's *Psalm 115*, conducted by Oscar Gershenson.

The voices were remarkably balanced, well-blended, clearly articulated and pleasant. Added to the delightful enthusiasm of an amateur choir, Gershenson imposed his thoroughly professional direction, musicianship and accuracy, which seemed to increase the singers' enjoyment.

The Yehudi Menuhin Chamber Orchestra, directed by Roni Porat, sounded solid and well rehearsed, supplying the accompaniment with subtlety and excellent musical taste.

Among the soloists, Noah Brieger was noteworthy for his dark-timbered, cultured bass and sensitive shaping of phrases.

THE JERUSALEM B'nai B'rith choir sponsored a recital of its Fraternidad Prize laureate, baritone Carlos Carzoglio, and pianist Ignacio Carrera from

B'NAI B'RITH PRIZE LAUREATE RECITAL
Carlos Carzoglio - baritone
Ignacio Carrera - Piano
Targ Music Center,
Ein Karem, April 2

Uruguay.

Carzoglio's sonorous voice, penchant for drama, and apparently Italian-style training served him best in songs by Tosti and an aria from Verdi's *Don Carlo*. In these he obviously felt at home, expressing their emotionality and pathos with vocal glamor and force of conviction.

The same style did not seem quite as appropriate for Figaro's arias from Mozart's *Il Nozze*, which sounded too serious, and heavy, and songs by Beethoven and Schubert were rendered too theatrically.

In Mozart's Sonata K. 333 and Schumann's *Childhood Scenes*, Carrera proved that, besides being a reliable accompanist, he is also a fine concert artist.

AN ALL-BEETHOVEN program was presented in this season's concert of the Hillel Hebrew

University Orchestra, conducted by Anita Kamien, featuring Allan Sternfield as soloist in *Piano Concerto No. 5*.

HILLEL HEBREW UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
Works by Beethoven
Jerusalem Theater, April 4

Sternfield combines the opposite extremes of tremendous forcefulness and delicate sensitivity. Force is frequently highlighted in many performances of this work, and it certainly manifested itself in Sternfield's rendition. The work's abundant subtleties and exquisite poetry, all too often lost, were there too, and the rare balance of both qualities is what made this performance so extraordinarily enjoyable.

The orchestra sounded well-consolidated, thoroughly rehearsed and enthusiastic - a remarkable achievement for a group of students, faculty members and immigrants. The *Leonore No. 3 Overture* and the *Fifth Symphony* were energized, sometimes at the expense of polish and sustained rests - but these would, no doubt, have been exaggerated expectations from such a well-meaning amateur ensemble.

TO COMMEMORATE the leg-

endary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, a selection from her repertoire was presented by vocalist Marcelle Moussari and oud (short-necked lute) player Na'im Rejwan in a program co-sponsored by the Jerusalem Municipality's Eastern Classic Music Center and the Boogie group.

The selection was intended to reflect Umm Kulthum's immense-

UMM KULTHUM SONGS
Gerard Behar Center
April 7

ly large gamut of vocal expression - melancholic to tortured, lyric, nostalgic, longing, and lively to suggestively coquettish love songs. In whatever genre, the songs convey a sense of great intensity and profound involvement.

Moussari attempted to render Umm Kulthum's supposedly inimitable style. Her expressive though somewhat thin voice captured the authentic, guttural-inflected voice production, the characteristic ornamental vocal style, the songs' highly emotional flavor, and the musical beauty of the literary Arabic language.

The audience's enthusiastic response was an encouraging indication of their appreciation of one of our closest neighbor's music culture.

book department

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Selective courage

The Vatican's recent much-anticipated document on the Holocaust was received with appreciation that the Catholic Church is grappling with this issue, but with disappointment at its omissions and equivocal tone. It was hoped that Pope John Paul II, who is credited with working to repair Church relations with the Jewish people, would take the committee-drafted document a step further. This Easter, the pope made a step in that direction, but then took a step backward with an unfortunate comment on Jerusalem.

The document, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," released by the Vatican a month ago, contained moving condemnations of antisemitism which, it exhorted, "must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart." It also called for "repentance" for the sins of "sons and daughters of the Church." But it also kept slipping into a defensive voice, and failed to echo the link that the pope himself had made between historic Christian antisemitism and the "pagan" antisemitism of the Nazi regime. The document also took pains to defend the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust, crediting him with saving "hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives."

Jews, however, cannot help but feel as the German and Polish bishops did in their 1994 statement, which declared that "the Church as a whole offered no effective resistance to Nazi persecution and extermination." In this context, Pope John Paul's remarkable statement, during this year's Good Friday "Via Crucis" procession, that the Jewish people "has been crucified by us for too long" contains precisely the emotive force that the document on the Holocaust lacked.

As powerful as it is, the pope's statement is not unprecedented. Pope John XXIII was in office for less than five years, but in that time he convened Vatican II, which exonerated the Jews of the charge of crucifying Jesus. Shortly before his death, he composed a prayer of atonement for the Church's accusation of deicide against the Jews: "Forgive us the curse which we unjustly laid on the name of the Jews. Forgive us that, with our curse, we crucified Thee a second time."

What adds weight, however, to the current pope's statement is his timing: Easter. Tragically, there is no time on the Christian calendar more associated with antisemitism than Easter. In the year 1144, in Norwich, England 19 Jews were hanged without a trial. This marked the first time that Jews were accused of the blood libel - murdering Christians to use their blood in religious rituals. Over the next

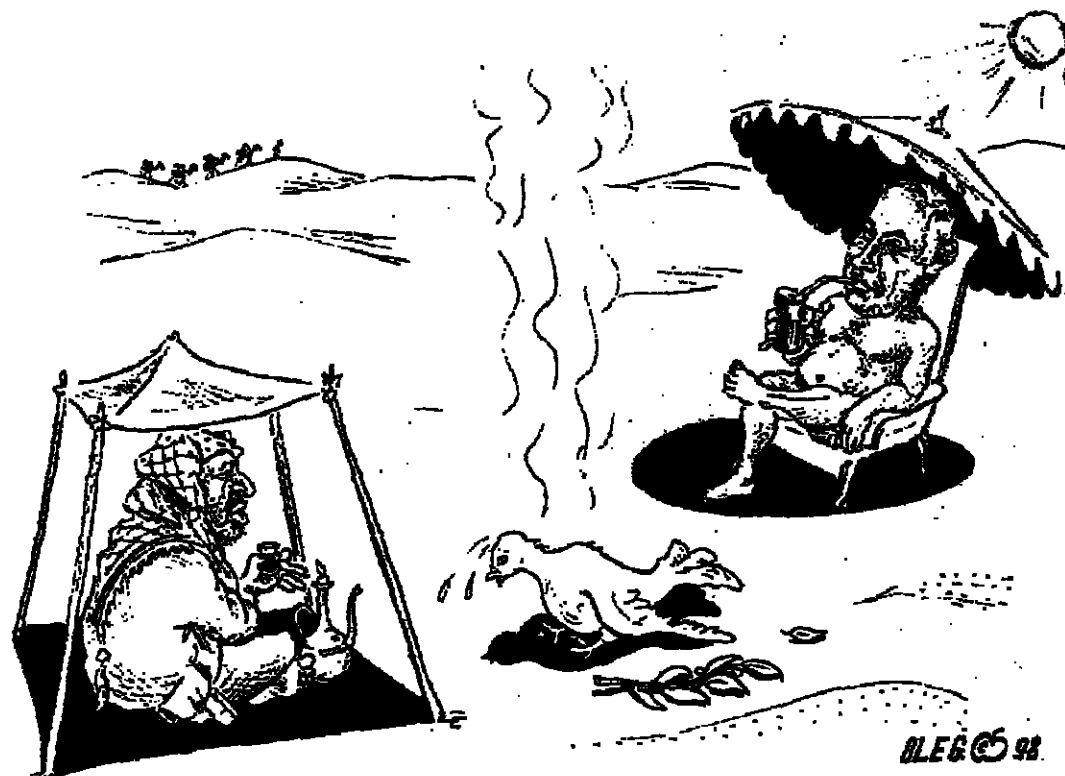
seven centuries, tens of thousands of Jews were murdered in connection with the blood libel, and Easter became a time of fear for the Jewish people.

By raising the painful issue of Christian antisemitism in the context of Easter, the pope, perhaps inadvertently, echoes the Pessach custom of taking away a drop of wine for each of the plagues God wrought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians - both acts signify a sensitivity to the suffering of others, even during a moment of celebration.

This papal sensitivity, however, is not as evident with regard to current events. In his Easter Sunday proclamation, in the single paragraph devoted to "leaders of the nations," the pope chose first to single out "the Middle East and particularly Jerusalem, where peace is put at risk by dangerous political decisions." It is somewhat astounding that, of all the "fratricidal strife and slaughter" throughout the world that the pope understandably mourns, that his only note of censure for one side of a conflict anywhere is for Israel on the matter of Jerusalem. Even harsh critics of the Netanyahu government would admit that responsibility for digging the peace process out of its current stalemate does not lie completely with one party. Is not clear why, for example, the pope should approach the conflict in a less balanced way than the United States or the European Union.

As unfortunate as it is, for the pope to gratuitously take sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is particularly striking to do so against Israel regarding Jerusalem. One might think that the pope's primary interest in Jerusalem would be that of safeguarding religious interests in a city that is holy to three faiths. Here Israel has a practically impeccable record, going to great lengths to place control over each faith's holy places in its own hands - most prominently, Moshe Dayan's decision to place the Moslem Waqf completely in charge of the Temple Mount. This record is even more impressive in contrast with widespread desecration of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries before the reunification of the city in 1967.

As the new millennium approaches, the pope seems to be moving toward even more courageous confrontations with the Church's past relations with the Jewish people. The difficulty of self-criticism for a religious body should not be underestimated. It should take less courage to withstand the temptation to follow political pressures or the conventional wisdom regarding the Middle East, rather than exhibiting true moral leadership.



40 in the shade

HELEN SCHARY MOTRO

Upon encountering my first Israeli *hamsin*, I flung open all the windows, pulled on a bikini and raced down to the beach. Returning home several hours later dry as the Negev and red as a lobster, I found my husband, the sabra, hunched immobile in the gloom of a darkened room. He had shut all the windows and closed all the shutters tight to boot.

The trick, he patiently explained, is to lay low as a stone fish, use as little energy as possible, and by all means not to let the ferocious heat and sand from outside into the house. That way you can live through several days in relative comfort.

The old-timers know what dress is *de rigueur* for a *hamsin*. Of course, it's the opposite from what your instincts would tell you. My first *hamsin* I braved the heat to attend lectures by a retired judge. Arriving in the lecture hall dripping wet in my sleeveless blouse, I found Judge Rubin immaculately swathed in a white linen shirt with long sleeves, buttoned right up to the neck. He didn't even look hot.

A *hamsin* is full of paradoxes. The best place to be may be Eilat, because the sea is as cool as ever, and anyway it's not that different a temperature than normal there. The worst place is Jerusalem, maybe because the contrast is so big. Furthermore, a *hamsin* grows more difficult with time; as the years go by, the human organism takes it harder.

The Hebrew word *sharav* is cited by Isaiah in the Bible. Arabic legend has it that there are fifty days like it a year - hence *hamsin* which means fifty. It is untranslatable into one word in English: "hot and dry with a south-easterly wind" falls far short of doing justice to its power.

For a *hamsin*, you don't have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing. You soon learn to know it yourself. It

Hard as it is to imagine: a 'hamsin' has its good aspects

comes upon you on those days in April and October when the morning air seems unnaturally bright, when the sun has a hazy orange aura around it, when an immobile sailboat on the Mediterranean recalls Coleridge's ominous lines: "As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean."

It starts slowly and then knocks you senseless when you open the door. You see the red line hit 40 on the thermometer stuck in the corner of your kitchen window and conclude that the heat must have melted the sensor. After a day or two you cannot remember ever having felt cold.

It can bring the country to a halt, a sort of meteorological force majeure.

Hikes are canceled, camping trips postponed, gardening put off. If it goes over 35 degrees schools are let out. It's not enough that God made us eat matza all week, someone said; He's going to make us suffocate doing it.

It seems the only people who consistently miss recognizing it are the ones responsible for the cooling systems in public buildings. In Tel Hashomer Hospital this week, they were taken by surprise as usual, and needed a day or two before managing to activate the air-conditioning.

YET, hard as it is to imagine, a *hamsin* has its good aspects. First of all, you can stop worrying if you switched up the little red electricity button on your wall before you went out; you can be sure the water for your shower will be boiling hot. And every housewife knows there is no more ideal day for doing laundry: by the time you've hung up the last undershirt, the first one is practically dry. The movie theaters do a booming business and so many throng to the air-conditioned malls that the vendors sell out all their merchandise, no matter what it is.

This week when we awoke to the season's first *hamsin*, my young daughter and her inexperienced friends raced naively out to the beach. I, on the other hand, became practically indistinguishable from a mummy encased in an ancient tomb. Closing all the shutters and bolting the windows, I hid inside loose long sleeves and flowing long pants. Then I dug in my heels to wait it out.

Of course, if the going got really tough, I knew I could always turn on my split unit air-conditioner, flick on CNN, fiddle around on the Internet, and get a lemon Eskimo pop from out of the freezer. Even a *hamsin* is not what it seems to be.

Reflections at 50

DAVID HARTMAN

When life in Israel was consumed by threats of war, terrorism and the intifada, many of the Jewish people were suppressed in the overriding interest of survival. One of the "blessings" of increased security and the peace process has been the exposure of these "private" issues and dilemmas to public scrutiny.

The euphoria of victory - the celebration of the heroic virtues of the "new Jew" Israel was to have created - is no longer the dominant mood of Israeli society. We now hear voices of self-criticism and self-reflection. At 50, Israelis can now look at their short history without skipping over the "difficult" issues - the treatment of local Arabs and of immigrants, the absence of full democratic values during the early Ben-Gurion period, the controversial rise of the Greater Israel movement after the Six Day War, etc.

The mirror of 50 years of statehood reflects our wars as well as our beauty spots. We can no longer sustain the myth of pure innocence nor can we suppress the worry we feel about our future when reviewing our past.

The history of Zionism is not a simple, one-dimensional story of good versus evil. The Palestinians are not the Amalekites, the demonic arch-enemies of the biblical people of Israel, and we Jews are not always the children of the prophets, the children of light fighting the children of darkness.

The history of nation-building is never simple. The place of the Indians within the American experience reveals the moral ambiguity of that nation's struggle for sovereignty. Facing the reality of the past often means facing the reality of moral compromise.

When and how did we justify the use of force in our otherwise morally justified struggle for sovereignty? In what way did our sense of communal solidarity - which was driven by the moral imperative to create a safe home for Jews - dictate a pragmatic approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Did we integrate so many people from diverse backgrounds into one society by trying to forge a single, homogeneous national culture? And did we thus fall into the trap of socio-cultural paternalism?

IT is against this background of critical self-reflection in the light of the past that new questions are being raised about such fundamental issues as the meaning of Jewish statehood in relation to the values of liberal democracy.

None of us can avoid these

Galut is no longer a defining feature of Jewish history

dilemmas, for they involve not only what we choose but also what we risk by not choosing. Can we have a Jewish state and allow for the full participation and self-expression of a sizable Arab minority? Can we have a Jewish state and ignore the national aspirations of Palestinians?

What norms and ideals of Judaism must be reinterpreted lest we destroy the basis of a liberal, pluralistic society? What norms and ideals are necessary to preserve the historical meaning of "Jewish" identity? Can one advocate total indifference to the spiritual legacy of the past - a "normalization" where Jews become like all the nations by abandoning the heritage, foundational texts and self-understanding of the past - while claiming continuity with Jewish history?

Can we infuse our society with Judaic content without coercive legislation? Should the State be responsible for mediating Jewish life and values or should it guarantee religious and cultural pluralism without becoming involved in questions of legitimacy and authority?

These are some of the burning questions that inform Jewish consciousness on the eve of Israel's 50th anniversary. This period has the quality of a Yom Kippur, a Day of Atonement, marked by *heshbon nefesh*, introspection, critical assessment of the past, together with hopeful anticipation and resolve for the future.

For those seeking the inspiration of self-congratulatory praise, the mood in Israel today will prove

disappointing. The strength of this country at 50 is that of a mature, self-criticism that can liberate Jews from the need for grandiose myths of moral superiority and greatness.

The rhetoric of moral superiority and uniqueness of the Jewish people creates only a delusion of strength. It is the reality of our daily lives, in all its complexity and ambiguity, that must define the future of Jewish history.

Who the Jew is and who the Jewish people are depend on what we as Jews do - the lives we live, the public institutions we build, the spirit and norms that infuse our political discourse and behavior, the way we treat minorities.

The concern with daily life reflects the profound spirit of the traditional emphasis upon Halacha. The Bible and the rabbis always sought to provide a detailed structure for building a life which seeks to implement the imperative to build a just and holy society. This is the healthy realism that infused the Judaic tradition.

Those who wish to share in the lived reality of Jewish history and not to live off inflated memories of the past, should rejoice as we celebrate this 50th year in the spirit of Yom Kippur - the spirit of a day of reckoning and self-criticism, of regret and of shame, of joy and of anticipation of a new future.

Hopefully, a new future awaits our people as we muster the moral strength to live with a healthy spirit of self-criticism. By healthy self-criticism, I wish to emphasize that it is necessary during our fiftieth year not to forget the important achievements of the past; otherwise, self-criticism becomes a masochistic indulgence in self-guilt which does not energize one to build a new future.

Facing our shortcomings should not blind us from the marvelous achievements of the past. We have built a home for all Jews. *Galut* is no longer a defining feature of Jewish history. The picture of the homeless, wandering Jew need not haunt our memory of Jewish history.

For this we must be joyful and grateful in our 50th year of celebration.

The writer is the director of the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Sticking to the facts

SUSAN HATTIS ROLEF

The 22 Hebrew-language episodes of Israel Television's *Tkuma* series have given rise to a major public controversy. The two main criticisms of the series are that it is politically tilted to the left and the Arab point of view of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that it seeks to be provocative, rather than to present as objective as possible an account of controversial issues and events surrounding Israel's 50-year history.

Less known to the public is the fact that there is also an eight-episode *Tkuma* series, in English, produced for screening on foreign television networks. This series includes two chapters telling the story of Israel chronologically, and another six dealing with specific issues, such as the waves of immigration, the question of religion and state, the political conflict within Israel, and economics.

The English *Tkuma*, produced by Steve Edwards of Israel TV, whom I had the great pleasure of assisting as an advisor to the series, uses some of the raw material seen in the Hebrew version, but is completely independent of the Hebrew series in its approach and in the interviews it includes.

The English version avoided, or at least tried to avoid, the two pitfalls into which the Hebrew series appears deliberately to have fallen. Though I suspect that the seven directors of the eight English episodes are overwhelmingly left-wing in their political inclinations, and that in treating the Arab-Israeli conflict, numerous Palestinians and Egyptians were interviewed, very few Israelis, regardless of eth-

nic, religious or political affiliation, will be unable to identify with at least part of what is shown and described, or feel that the series was produced by "the enemy."

Thus the series is a worthy and valuable contribution to the extremely problematic jubilee celebrations. Even from a technical point of view, the final result is impressive, despite its small budget.

WHILE political parties and movements, and politically motivated social movements have every right in the world - in fact a duty - to present particularistic points of view in the strongest, most uncompromising terms, the jubilee celebrations nevertheless call for something else.

Not that this means an erasing of opinions or blurring of attitudes, and certainly not a "Jewish Agency film" approach, where everyone is smiling and everything painted in the most glowing terms. No, what is needed is a true demonstration of what pluralism means in a democracy, regrettable (from a national point of view) as the extremes manifested in this pluralism might be.

Thus, regarding the economic history of Israel, the issue is not whether the socialism and state-centralism prevalent in the early years of the state, were inevitable and overwhelmingly successful, or artificially imposed and ruinous, but what, for better or worse, that system achieved and how it gradually evolved into today's capitalism. And then the question has to

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAEAN TO HIMSELF

Sir. - One of your readers queried recently why so many people criticized Jonathan Rosenblum. I think I can enlighten her.

Rosenblum's "Reflections while cleaning for Pessah" (April 5) was a paean to himself. For example: He wrote of his joy in having a large number of children and congregating with rabbis and living according to the Torah. In contrast to his classmates and other law students who became the US solicitor-general and the president of the United States; and gloats

that he feels he chose a more fulfilling path. This is unbelievably arrogant - and just plain silly. Thankfully, the US has a worldly, sophisticated and gracious scholar as a president, involved in his citizens' lives and needs - and not Jonathan Rosenblum with his outmoded viewpoints and pathetic pretensions of greatness.

MYRA KAYE

Rehovot.

URBAN HELL

Sir. - Last night my husband and I were woken at 1 a.m. and at 5 a.m. by car alarms going off, a frequent nightly and daily occurrence.

Our urban environment is gradually changing to an urban hell, with constant noise and atmospheric pollution. Many disturbances, such as air-conditioners, are unavoidable, but surely in the matter of car alarms some serious thinking should be devoted to the question of whether they really are necessary.

Their primary function is to prevent car theft, and in this they have proven ineffectual. Is this ineffective protection of property really of much greater importance than the quality of the environment and the health of Israel's citizens?

FREDA BERMAN

Rehovot.

WRONG SNAKE

Sir. - Yitzhak Mordechai is a general all right but Uri Dan and Dennis Eisenberg in "He's a general," (March 5) should be aware of the fact that snakes which embrace (and then choke to death) their victims are boas and pythons, and not vipers.

DR. E.E. FARHI

Tel Aviv.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On April 14, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported that an important concession to enable German Jews to enter Palestine was announced by the British foreign secretary Sir John Simon on the conclusion of a debate in the House of Commons. Sir Arthur Wauchoppe, the high commissioner for Palestine, had been authorized to issue a thou-

sand immigration certificates to working class German Jews over the period of six months.

50 years ago: On April 14, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that a Hadassah convoy, consisting of 10 vehicles transporting physicians, nurses, patients and Hebrew University staff, came under fierce seven-hour Arab attack as it passed through the

Sheikh Jarrah Quarter of Jerusalem. The Jewish casualties were 35 killed and 20 wounded, including Dr. Haim Yassky, Director of Hadassah Medical Organization.

At the UN the Commission for Palestine Report severely criticized Britain for its lack of cooperation.

Alexander Zvielli

Forget the doves and rainbows

When an Israeli Jew got together with an Israeli Arab and a West Bank Palestinian to paint a peace mural, he found betrayal not brotherhood, writes Sue Fishkoff

A former US Army base in Monterey, California, inside a warehouse where America's largest light infantry division used to repair its tanks, three artists — an Israeli Jew, an Israeli Arab and a West Bank Palestinian — this week put the finishing touches on a collaborative mural of peace.

Their 10-by-30-foot panel is the latest addition to The World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear, an international mural-in-progress begun 10 years ago in Los Angeles. When completed, it will feature 14 separate panels, seven of them created by artists from around the world.

The theme uniting the panels is an exploration of the processes societies must undergo in order to achieve peace. The seven panels now completed include one by a Finnish artist, painted in 1989, and a panel completed by a Ukrainian artist in August 1990 at Gorky Park, Moscow.

Eighteen months ago project founder Judith Baca, a California artist and teacher, invited Adi Yekutieli, director of the art department at the Gordon School of Arts in Herzliya, to create a panel expressing his vision of a future Middle East without fear.

Yekutieli, who specializes in collaborative, community-based arts projects, including an ongoing youth project in the Galilee village of Tira, told Baca that he could not paint such a panel on his own. He told her that any realistic vision of Middle East peace had to involve contributions from all parties to the conflict: Israeli Jew, Israeli Arab and Palestinian.

Through his connections in Tira, Yekutieli located Ahmed Bweerat, a founder of the Israeli Arab guild of artists. Bweerat, a resident of Arara near Haifa, agreed to take part. His reasoning was simple, and heartfelt: "I want to give my children and Adi's a positive message with each other. It's a positive way, through art. We don't need Netanyahu and we don't need anyone else for that."

Bweerat's search for a Palestinian contributor, however, was more difficult. Artist after artist refused to participate in what they perceived as an "Israeli" project. Yekutieli explains, until Bweerat got a somewhat guarded acceptance from Sulman Mansour, director of an east Jerusalem art center.

"I had to show Sulman that this wasn't an 'international Zionist conspiracy' project," Yekutieli says. "I brought in Judy to explain it to him."

Mansour also wasn't happy with Bweerat's participation, wondering aloud why Yekutieli had brought "this traitor" — an Arab Israeli — into an artistic exploration of what was, he felt, a Jewish-Palestinian conflict.

THIS INITIAL conflict set the tone for what would become a difficult artistic collaboration. "From the beginning, as the 'aggressor,' I had to be responsible for taking care of all Sulman's concerns," Yekutieli says today. "That dynamic continued through the entire process."

Reiterating that the mural project was "collaborative, not cooperative," Yekutieli says that the artists continually had to suppress their own hostilities, fears and egos in order to allow the other

artists' visions to coexist on the same panel as their own.

Co-exist, not blend together, he stresses. "Art can be a space within which we can, if not reconcile our differences, at least negotiate them," he says.

"On a personal level, it was easy for us to create a relationship," Bweerat says. "But on a working level, things were more difficult. It was deciding the details that caused arguments."

"We had to allow ourselves to be hurt and angry," Yekutieli continues. "Then we'd take one step back, and try to come to an agreement. We have politics around us all the time, but we can't work at the judgmental level, always bringing up what happened 100 years ago, or 50 years ago. Words get so self-righteous; it's the non-verbal that is important."

THE THREE artists decided to enlist the help of children in their three communities, in order to develop images of "non-fear." The plan was for the artists to take the children's images and refine them, or rework them, for the final mural panel. The combination of children's intuitive conception of a world without fear, expressed on a canvas with the technical skill of adult artists, would be, Yekutieli hoped, "magic."

With funding from the Canada Fund for Dialogue and Development, six women artists were found in the three communities within Israel and the Palestinian territories, each of which worked with a group of children over a period of six months late last year. What they found, Yekutieli says, was not surprising.

"In Israel, we have a rich vocabulary of fear and very few words of non-fear," he says. Pointing to the completed panel, a swirling mass of bright colors and sharp edges, he notes, "As you can see, this is not a project about rainbows and balloons. The conflict is very long. There have been many victims on both sides. We wanted to get to authentic images of non-fear. The strength of the images we got from the kids... were not cutesy."

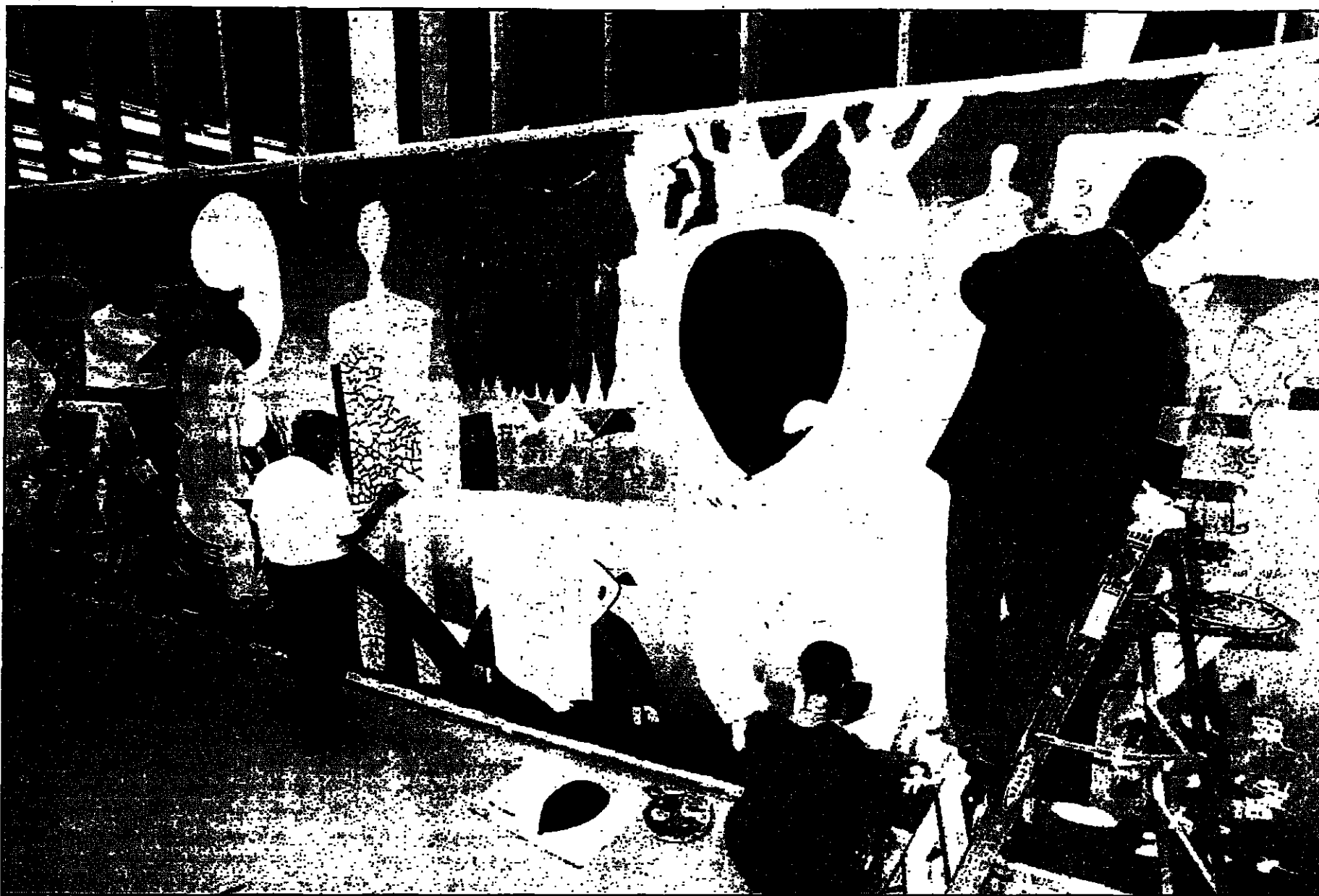
After reviewing hundreds of images created by the children, the three artists selected 33 children between the ages of eight and 16, several from each community, to attend a weekend workshop this January in east Jerusalem.

Some parents, who had permitted their children to attend the preliminary, "segregated" level of the project, did not allow them to move on to this final, collaborative weekend; replacements had to be brought in.

The workshop took place on the weekend when fears of a renewed crisis in the Persian Gulf were at their height. A Canadian TV crew, which filmed the workshop as it took place, was so caught up in the tension, Bweerat relates, that "they asked the kids about Saddam Hussein instead of peace between our communities."

The strength of the workshop, Bweerat says, is the personal transformation the children underwent. "In four years, some of these children will go to the army, and they'll all be facing each other across borders," he continues. "That's what we're trying to avoid."

Yekutieli is more circumspect



The World Wall: Depicting a future without fear proved to be a challenging and painful task for the artists who created the Middle East panel. (Richard Pimick)

about the power of art to bring societal change. "Art exercised through the collaborative process can impact a community, even if it doesn't transform it," he cautions. "Let's not be megalomaniacs."

ON MARCH 22, the three artists arrived in Monterey to put paint to canvas. They labored non-stop for 10 days, helped by three student assistants from California State University at Monterey Bay, a new university established several years ago on a decommissioned US Army base.

The mural-in-progress, which has already travelled to Finland and Russia and will soon be on its way to Mexico, is presently installed at Cal State Monterey's Institute for Visual and Public Art.

The just-completed Middle East panel is held together thematically by three large black-and-white humanoid figures, each representing one of the three peoples as viewed stereotypically by one of the other artists. For example, the Palestinian figure is a street-cleaner, suggested to Mansour by Yekutieli on the grounds that "this is most Israelis' image of the typical Palestinian."

The Arab Israeli figure is a calm, genderless person sitting on a rainbow-like bridge between the Palestinian and the Israeli Jewish figures.

"I see myself, the Arab Israeli, as sitting on a bridge between the two communities," Bweerat says. "It's a schizophrenia. I have a split personality, a split face, loyalties to both sides. My job is to become the bridge between them."

The bridge itself is composed of the colors of the Palestinian and

Israeli flags, with a black line dividing the two. "The black line symbolizes 50 years of hatred, wars and struggle," Bweerat continues. "The bottom of the bridge is broken, and will only be repaired when there is real peace. It's not easy to sit on the bridge and wait, wondering when the fighting will end. It's my people on one side, and my state on the other."

The Israeli Jewish image is just as jarring. "It's an angel of sorts, with eyes closed and arms outstretched in front of it. Mansour suggested the image to Yekutieli, who says that only after he finished painting it did he realize it was meant to be the Angel of Death."

Is that how Palestinians view Israeli Jews, he wondered? For a man who has devoted so much of his professional life to collaborative, peace-oriented projects, that idea was profoundly disturbing.

Bweerat understands the image of the Israeli Jew in a more conciliatory way. "It shows Adi's beautiful side, his strength," he says. "He opened his arms to us and said, 'Here, take this space and express yourselves as you wish.' He gave us this space, and brought us into this project to do what we want."

Even after the project's completion, the struggle and miscommunications continued. Just before the panel's public unveiling on April 9, Bweerat was explaining the significance of a fourth figure, one based on a sculpture installation Mansour had done some years ago in east Jerusalem. It shows a man of clay, without features. The clay has hardened and cracked, so

hundreds of fissures run up and down the silent figure.

"By this, Sulman meant to show: I am this figure, this body without breath, like Man before

"I have a split personality, a split face, loyalties to both sides"

— Ahmed Bweerat

Genesis," Bweerat interpreted. "This is the Palestinian people. The Jews want to divide Israel, giving the desert to Ishmael and the green part to Isaac."

When Bweerat finished his exposition, Yekutieli was white-faced. "I feel completely betrayed," he said quietly. "This is the first time I have heard this explanation. When this figure was suggested for the project, I understood it as a universal figure, not as a rhetorical symbol of Palestinian suffering. I never would have allowed it. What is this now, three [Arab] figures against one [Jew]?"

As he continued expressing his anger, Yekutieli realized the miscommunication between these

artists paralleled the relations of power and oppression that characterize the entire Israel-Palestinian conflict.

"I feel I gave so much to this project," he mused. "I carried the responsibility of organizing it, of getting the funding, of all the day-to-day details. I agreed to the inclusion of this figure, because Sulman wanted it — and now this! This rhetoric wasn't part of our collaborative agreement."

"This is the typical Israeli response," Yekutieli continues, wryly. "I've given you so much, and look what you do to me. I don't deserve this."

During crises, people tend to withdraw into their own communities, Yekutieli says. At one point during the mural painting, Bweerat suggested that Yekutieli include Palestinian and Israeli Arab images within his Jewish iconographic figure. Yekutieli refused.

"That was where I reached my personal limit," he says. "I love Ahmed dearly, but this was too much. What must I carry both of them into my future?"

To find solace, Yekutieli turned to the local Jewish community in Monterey. A group of children from a nearby synagogue visited the mural project the day after this argument, and Yekutieli asked them to help him come up with a new, universal image to

include in his part of the mural. "I went to my community to help me come up with my images," he says.

NOW THAT the panel is complete, the three artists hope to raise funds to bring the entire mural to Israel and the Palestinian territories for a massive exhibition. The logistics involved, both in terms of fundraising within Israel and working out where the mural will be shown, are enormous. They told the California press they hope to bring it to Israel later this year, but privately Yekutieli admits "it could take six months or six years."

In order to continue the collaboration they began with the children's groups, the artists are considering creating a mosaic from some of the kids' images on non-fear, and putting that mosaic on the border between Israel and a future Palestinian state.

"Now there's a project," declares Yekutieli. He says he's glad he took part in the World Wall, and believes it may be the single thing he's most proud of in his life. Though still smarting from the shock of hearing Bweerat put a nationalist twist on what he took to be a universal image of non-fear, Yekutieli says finally, "Maybe this is all we could have achieved at this time. And maybe that's okay."



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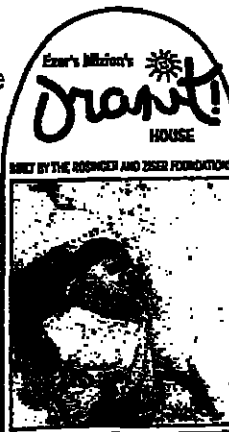
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Matza-do about matza

Matza. You can't escape it. Every year there it is, sitting on your plate, staring at you, challenging you to consider it food and take a bite.

Many people I know despise the stuff. I swallow their required symbolic portion at the Seder, then avoid it like the 11th plague, seeing the holiday as a good opportunity to cut down on their carbohydrate.

Others view it as a personal cooking challenge to make this flat, dry sheet edible. They whip up such concoctions as Cajun Matza Balls with Green Onion, or Matza-rella Lasagna (yes, these recipes actually exist).

Or, like the women I recently saw on television pitching their new Pessah cookbook, they try to convert matza into all sorts of unnatural configurations, creating matza tortilla chips ready to dunk in salsa, or matza cannoli stuffed with sweet cheese.

I tend to fall into the first category. My take on Pessah cooking creativity is this: If the Israelites did not have time to let their bread rise before fleeing Egypt, would they really have had time to cut their matza into triangular nacho chips or roll it into Italian pastries?

Pessah week just isn't the same without a daily dose of matza and the accompanying intestinal distress

My long and complex relationship with matza began as a child when the stuff made me into something of an annual celebrity. Growing up in an extremely WASPY New England town, the matza I would bring to school for lunch was considered exotic.

Every year, I was forced to hold the box up in front of the entire class for show-and-tell and give everyone a taste.

Observing the Pessah restrictions gave me a holy aura of self-sacrifice among my peers as I nobly turned my nose up at the cupcakes they munched right in front of me.

In many ways, Pessah temptation was harder to resist than the fast on Yom Kippur. At least on that holiday you were fairly isolated from food, hanging out in synagogue and at home with fellow Jews. But during Pessah I had to walk among those who were chomping on forbidden goodies — and turn them down.

What I recall most fondly about those times was how the non-Jews around me tried so hard to accommodate my and the other Jewish children's needs in the name of cultural diversity, but didn't quite get it. They knew we should eat matza instead of bread, but the finer points of the Pessah rules were too complex for them to grasp.

I remember how proud my

school was the year it supplied matza, placed alongside the regular meal of the day: meat and cheese lasagna, with chocolate cake for dessert. Or the local pizzeria that consider-

ately created special matza pizzas for their Jewish clients — topped with cheese and pepperoni! There's no getting around it. In the Diaspora, Pessah is much more of an adventure and going to great lengths to celebrate it is a lot of fun.

Look at the young Israelis trekking around Asia who flock to Bangkok and New Delhi for the famous Lubavitch Pessah Seders and matza distribution. Had they been home in Tel Aviv, they would probably be running to the nearest Arab village in search of pita.

MOVING to Israel takes much of the challenge out of things. The array of Pessah products is laid out in front of you in every shop you enter. As for non-Pessah items, they just aren't around. Neither the neighborhood bakery nor Dunkin' Donuts would dare send baking odors wafting through the air. There is little temptation to resist, so you don't feel particularly noble resisting it.

Over the past few years, things have gone a step further. An entire industry has cropped up which makes matza obsolete. Israeli manufacturers are producing Pessah cakes, Pessah wafers and, on the streets, folks are eating shwarma wrapped in pita made with matza meal, and downing fast-food hamburgers on matza-buns.

If you ask how this week is different from any other week, the answer is "not much" — except for having the children out of school and underfoot.

Convenient as it is, this business of finding loopholes in the regulations just feels wrong. It's too easy. Pessah week just isn't the same without a daily dose of matza and the accompanying forms of interesting intestinal distress.

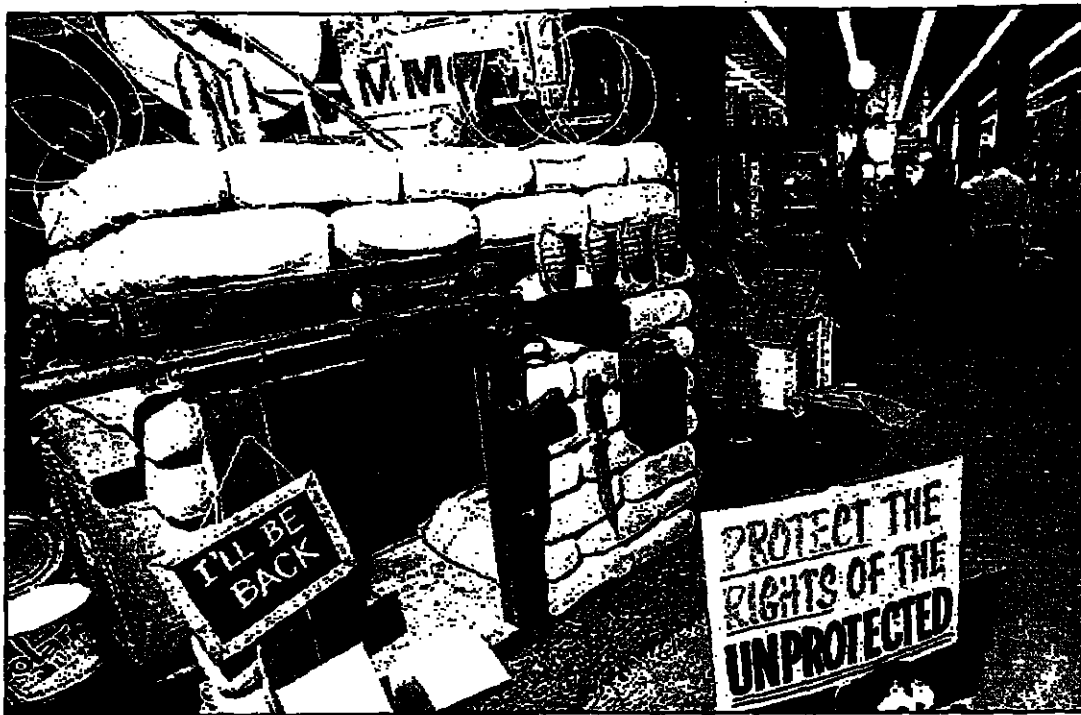
In my book, you can forget about the bitter herbs for identifying with the suffering of our forefathers. What's a little horse-dung washed down with wine on Seder night? No big deal.

For me, the moment I finally bite into that first soft slice of fresh-baked bread — my teeth aching from crunching matza and a digestive system that feels like it has been processing dry cement for a week — that's when I truly grasp the Pessah theme of moving from slavery to liberation, on a gut level.

Home Front



Allison Kaplan Sommer



This custom doghouse — one of 46 to be auctioned in LA on Saturday — resembles a bunker.

Palaces for pooches

Being in the doghouse isn't so bad if it's one of the deluxe abodes created by Hollywood architects and interior designers. Bob Pool reports

They are panting over the latest housing designs at an architecture and interior decorating conference in West Hollywood. You'd expect plenty of panting, of course, around doghouses.

Except that the pet shelters that some of Los Angeles's top designers were sniffing around in the center lobby of the Pacific Design Center cost as much as \$10,000 to build.

Created by architects, interior designers, movie set decorators and artists, the 46 doghouses will be auctioned on April 18 to raise money for a nonprofit group that cares for the pets of AIDS patients.

"Fabulous. These are simply fabulous," marveled Sasha Furman, a Los Angeles educator who is among the 15,000 people attending the three-day Westweek '98 conference. Furman was admiring a tent-like "Arabian Nights" doghouse outfitted with a genuine Persian rug by interior designer David White. "It makes me wish I

had a dog," Furman said. Animals aren't a necessary accessory for these doghouses, however. "I doubt if dogs will ever see them," admitted Bret Parsons, a design industry executive who helped organize the auction to benefit Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS). "Two years ago when we did this, a lady bought one as a playhouse for her daughter," he said.

"People look at these more as art, as sculpture, than as doghouses." Artist Alison Saar's corrugated-roof doghouse mimics her own style of assemblage art. Dogousian Gallery, the skylight-lit doghouse that artist Laddie John Dill designed to resemble an art gallery, has walls lined with tiny oil portraits of dogs done by painter Christophe Cassidy. Miniature dogs astride tiny stools can be seen through small windows in the doghouse resembling a Western saloon that interior designer Maxine White built. Architect Tom Farrage used

fiberglass to construct a 9-foot-tall doghouse that has room in the middle for a cat — and a birdhouse at the top.

Movie prop makers and set designers have contributed several of the more elaborate doghouses. A plastic spaceship-like dome equipped with paw-sized buttons that dogs can press to control a miniature TV set, a fan, interior lights and an automatic motorized door was built by prop makers John Zabrocky, Mark Robinson and Mike Ladish. It took three weeks to construct.

"I see it being used more as something like a liquor cabinet than a doghouse," another prop maker, Bruce Giddens, said. A doghouse made of fiberglass "sandbags" to resemble a military bunker is outfitted with mock guns, knives, hand grenades and bombs. A make-believe vulture peering through binoculars sits atop a flashing arrow that beckons cats to a box of cat food attached to the bunker by set decorators from Wilcox Studio Props. Next to it is a doghouse built by a design collective called Hedge that is made from shrubs.

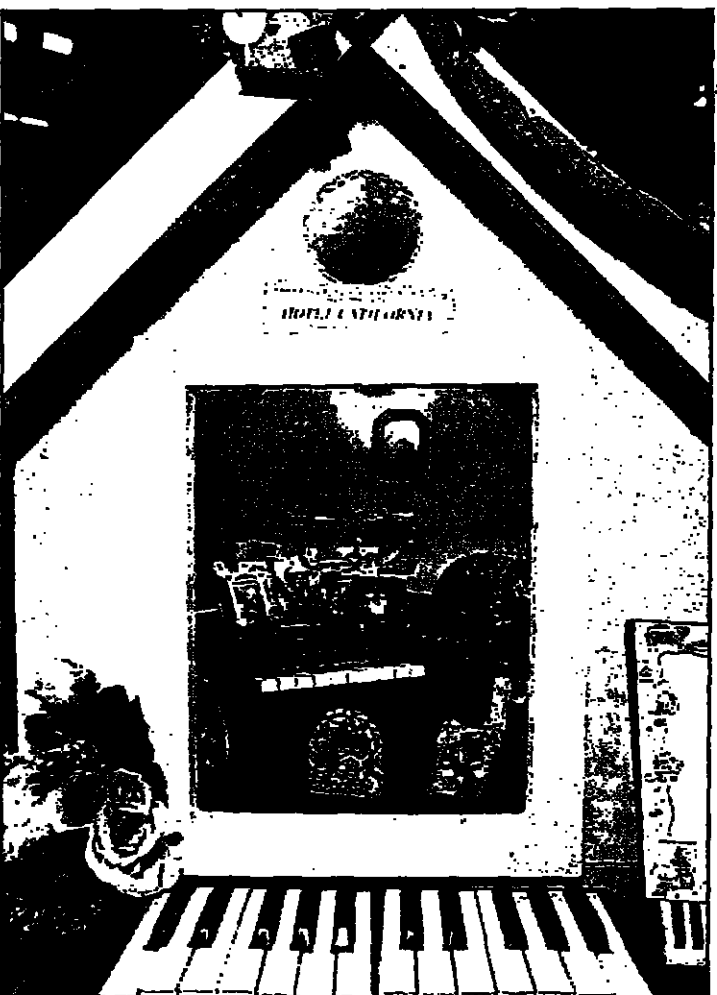
Conference attendee Elizabeth Kellen was debating whether to make a minimum \$250 bid on it. "My fox terrier would love it. But she'd probably destroy it," said Kellen, a Los Angeles furniture designer.

Other doghouses were designed to be replicas of Mexican adobe, the famed Phillip Johnson Glass House, Chinese homes, a tiny nylon tent, a treasure chest, a grass-roofed log cabin and Dorothy's house in *The Wizard of Oz*. It features a yellow brick road made of dog biscuits and a wire-framed "tornado" ripping part of its roof off.

Gai Gherardi, co-owner of L.A. Eyeworks, built a duplex doghouse resembling giant eyeglasses. She said it cost about \$6,000 to construct. Interior designer Shari Canepa said three of her staff members spent three days on the disco-like doghouse she dubbed "Lassie's Lounge, a bitchin' club."

Merry Norris, an art consultant who helped stage the doghouse show, said as much as \$100,000 may be raised through the auction. The sale two years ago raised \$40,000.

"The designers will tell me they didn't realize it was going to take so much time or so cost so much money," Norris said. But, doggone it, "they seriously thank me for inviting them."



The 'Hotel California' doghouse features piano keys. (L.A. Times)

Confront your fears

Dear Ruthie, I am in a bit of a quandary. At this point in my life I feel that my best career move would be to go to America and perhaps attend business school and/or work for a number of years. My wife, however, is very close to her family and can't bear the thought of leaving the country for what amounts to a minimum four-year commitment (enough time to work and pay back business school loans, etc.) Part of the problem lies in the fact that she is not convinced that this move is really necessary, and suggests that I go to school here.

I wouldn't mind living in the States, and might even enjoy myself. My wife claims she would suffer, but my gut instinct is that she would end up enjoying life there as well.

It is important to note that we never discussed this before we got married, so I am "dumping" it on her.

Prickly Sabra
Somewhere in Israel

Dear PS, The ability to convince others to pursue or approve of a proposed path is in direct proportion to the ability of the proponent of this path to convince himself. Your wife may have many valid, rational reasons for not wanting to leave Israel for the U.S., but the one that seems not to have occurred to you is probably the most significant: she senses some internal wavering on your part. Since you are the one tantalized by the idea of school and/or work abroad and not she, you need to be the one totally at peace with the idea. If you were totally secure about taking this plunge, your wife might be

less fearful of diving in alongside you. It is always convenient to have external forces serve as hurdles where chasing our dreams is concerned. This is because we all harbor fears when it comes to putting dreams to any concrete test.

In your case, your wife is a perfect buffer. Secure in the conviction that she is the "obstacle," you can avoid examining the internal hurdles that stand in your way. One such hurdle might be your own fear of leaving familiar surroundings (family, friends, even landscape). Another might be your fear of failure. Yet another might be the fear of disturbing the balance in your marriage. After all, if your wife is close to her family, living with her away from them could place an extra burden on you as a helpline. One final point you might examine: You stress the fact that you "dumped" this desire on your wife only after getting married. Rather than accepting that desires change as life progresses, you seem to feel that you somehow tricked your wife into believing you would never develop yearnings you did not possess previously.

As soon as you can believe in your own motives and confront your own fears, you will have a far easier time convincing your wife that she, too, would benefit from such a move. Without meeting these preconditions you won't have a chance of doing so. But then, perhaps that is what you'd really prefer.

Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, Jerusalem 91000. For E-mail: ruthie@jpost.co.il ('Dear Ruthie' also appears in In Jerusalem and in City Lights on Fridays.)

Dear Ruthie



Ruthie Blum

GRAPEVINE

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

In tandem with the rest of the nation, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his family are taking time out during hol hamoed Pessah to relax and do their own thing. They chose to get away from it all in Eilat.

The Netanyahu will be traveling further south in mid-August, when they head for Australia where, inter alia, they will be welcomed by gold tycoon Joseph Gutnick, who financed Habad's "Bibi is good for the Jews" campaign in the 1996 elections. Gutnick and his wife, Sterra visited here with the Netanyahu on the Saturday night before Pessah. Accompanying the PM and his wife Down Under will be Bezeq chairman Izzy Tapoohi, who is an Australian expatriate.



Russian ambassador Mikhail Bogdanov (Eilat Eshel)

former law professor, had assured Sheetrit that he would not be convicted — and was promptly asked to put it in writing. Sheetrit carried the note around like a talisman. Clearly it was a powerful one.

HEADS of diplomatic missions from nearly all the countries that have relations with Israel are contributing letters, drawings, etchings and historic documents to a golden book celebrating Israel's 50th anniversary. The book and its contributors will be on view at a gala event for some 700 guests at the Tel Aviv Museum on May 3, proceeds from which will benefit the Jewish-Arab education project being run under the auspices of the Tel Aviv Foundation.

One of the first ambassadors to respond to the request was Russian ambassador Mikhail Bogdanov, who presented his country's coat of arms. Without perestroika, Bogdanov would have been the ambassador of the USSR, which established diplomatic ties with Israel in the early history of the state.

NOT in his wildest dreams is Zuhra Mehta likely to have imagined himself conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at Yad Vashem. But then again, what better place to celebrate the rebirth of a people doomed 60 years ago to annihilation? The IPO will play Noam Sheriff's *Revival of the Dead* in a May 4 program marking the 50th anniversary of the state that rose

APOSTOLIC Delegate Archbishop Andrea di Montezemolo, who is departing from Israel, will hold a farewell reception today in the Notre Dame of the Jerusalem Center, where the Pontifical Institute and the Embassy of Peru joined forces for the opening of an exhibition of Colonial Paintings of Cusco, Peru, under the title "The Virgins of the Andes."

ONE of America's best-known legal experts, authors and a contributor to *The Jerusalem Post's* Op-Ed page, among those of numerous other publications, Alan Dershowitz will be receiving an Honorary Ph.D. at Haifa University next week.

JUST when it seemed that Labor was about to endorse Shimon Sheetrit in the race for mayor of Jerusalem, some of the party's wheelers and dealers voiced reservations, and the stamp of approval was deferred. This didn't stop Sheetrit, who is running on the One Jerusalem ticket, from going ahead with his opening rally at the Shalom Hotel.

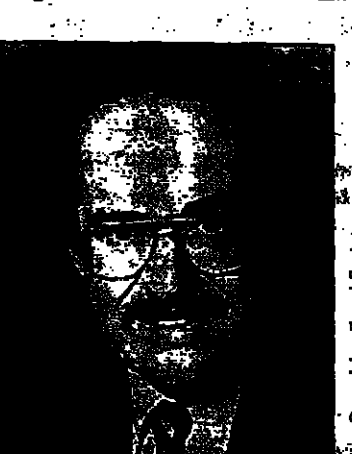
Some of those who spoke up on



Former Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek (left) backs Shimon Sheetrit's (right) candidacy.

his behalf included Teddy Kollek and Amos Mar Haim, who were both in fine form; Miriam Bonfil, secretary-general of Na'amat Jerusalem, who simultaneously made a pitch for greater female representation at City Hall and for more non-religious kindergartens; and day-care centers; council members Israel Shulderman and Shimon Ben-Haim and Haim Cohen, secretary-general of the Jerusalem district of the Labor Party. He assured Sheetrit that regardless of any decision by Labor per se, the party's Jerusalem District would stand solidly behind him. Sheetrit refrained from any bombastic statements, saying merely that he wanted to get the city back on track to what it had been under Kollek's reign.

Meanwhile, political activist and failed would-be politician Esther Bitan went around distributing invitations to her annual Mimouna party, which is usually attended by Shimon Peres and other leading Labor Party figures.



Honorary Ph.D. to Alan Dershowitz

LIKUD and coalition whip Meir Sheetrit, acquired last week of fraudulent use of a Jewish Agency credit card, discovered who his real friends were during his four-year ordeal. The most heartening demonstration of support came from Finance Minister Yoram Neeman, who successfully survived a trial of his own. Neeman, a

guard, but Uri Porat and Moti Kirschbaum, incoming and outgoing directors-general of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, met last Thursday with IBA department heads as a preliminary to the upcoming transition. Porat, who occupied the position once before, is returning after a decade-long absence.

"Whoever comes back to the IBA is psychopathic, suicidal or really likes the IBA and its staff," he said, adding, "I'm neither psychopathic nor suicidal."

IT wasn't quite the changing of the



IBA head Uri Porat: I'm not psychopathic

guard, but Uri Porat and Moti Kirschbaum, incoming and outgoing directors-general of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, met last Thursday with IBA department heads as a preliminary to the upcoming transition. Porat, who occupied the position once before, is returning after a decade-long absence.

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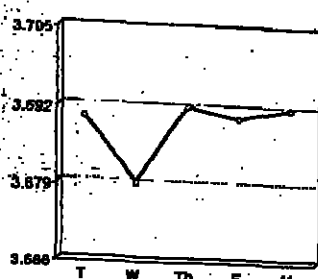
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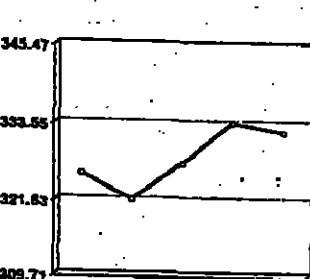
MARKETS

in brief

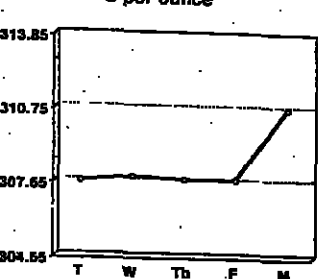
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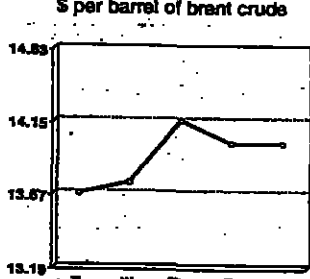
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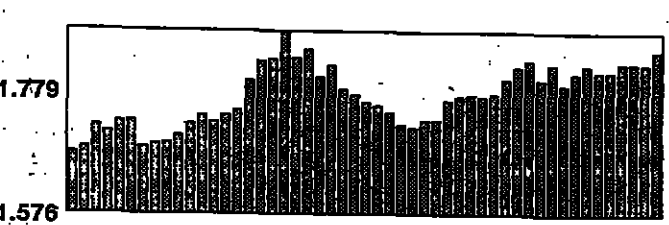
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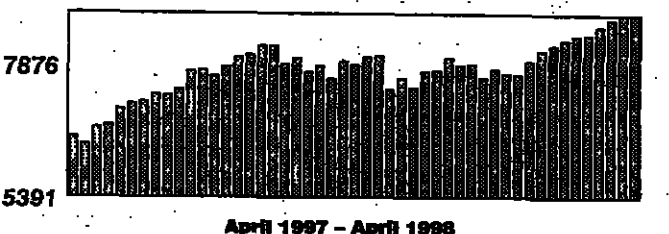
OIL



DOLLAR / DEUTSCHEMARK



DOW JONES INDUST. AVG.



Analysts: Convertibility well-timed with euro's launch

By DAVID HARRIS

Israel is highly likely to benefit from the launch of the euro in January, a matter of months after the move to a fully convertible shekel, analysts said yesterday.

Speaking at the Bank of Jerusalem Business Forum, Pinchas Landau, CEO of the Euro Strategies business consultancy, said Europeans will be new markets as trading within Europe will be far more restricted, with deals being completed in only one currency.

Some experts are suggesting that as many as 50 percent of European banking institutions will disappear or be swallowed up in takeovers by the largest organizations.

"Pension and mutual funds will look to Israeli markets, at first to buy Israeli government bonds, then at a later stage they will buy linked bonds," said Landau.

This view was backed by Dan Galai, joint managing director of Sigma Portfolio Selection Consulting & Management. "Foreign financial services will open here, but I don't see Citibank [for example] coming in and opening retail services," said Galai. According to him, the principal area of interest for foreign institutions will be investment banking.

Israel is in a perfect place to take advantage of developments in Europe, the analysts said. In several cases the Far East "tigers" have smaller and less developed economies than

that of Israel, yet investors still went there. Now with reduced opportunities for foreign currency transactions in Europe, if Israel goes ahead with currency liberalization, European investors will see the shekel as a very lucrative option.

Much of the shekel trading will be conducted offshore, according to Landau. Trading in London could amount to as much as a daily \$2 billion-\$3b., with a \$6b. derivatives market also being developed in London.

Given the failure to reform the capital markets here, there is no way Israel can cope with this volume of activity and so transactions are bound to be conducted overseas. The equity market left Israel some time ago, said Landau.

Israeli banks will have to prepare for competition, in the era of a fully convertible shekel, said Galai.

Meanwhile, he warned that the Israeli economy must not undergo any overnight changes in the post-liberalization period. "You can expect [the likes of investment magnate George] Soros, and I mean this generically, to attack the Israeli shekel if the government and Bank of Israel behave in an irregular way," said Galai.

The Asian crisis began last August in Thailand where the government attempted to maintain an artificially strong currency, but "you can't maintain in the medium-term something that has no economic basis, the economy wins out," added Galai.



Hong Kong fish crisis

Workers from Hong Kong's Agriculture and Fisheries Department remove dead fish in plastic bags for disposal yesterday. An algae attack known as 'red tide' has killed half of Hong Kong's farmed fish, causing an estimated loss of \$9 million. (Reuters)

NationsBank, BankAmerica to form biggest US bank

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (Bloomberg) — NationsBank Corp. and BankAmerica Corp. agreed to merge in a transaction valued at more than \$60 billion, forming the largest US bank and the first with offices across the US.

The transaction, the second-largest merger, will create a bank with branches from Florida to the state of Washington and more than \$570b. of assets. Combining the nation's third- and fifth-largest banks will give the company more than 29 million customers in 22 states and offices in 38 countries.

BankAmerica investors will get 1.1316 shares for each share they hold while NationsBank shareholders keep their stock. The merger follows last week's agreement by Citicorp and Travelers Group Inc. to combine in an \$80b. transaction that will form the world's biggest financial company, putting pressure on their rivals to grow.

"There's an incredible frenzy going on right now," said Laurie Buntain, analyst and head trader at SIFE Trust Fund Inc. in Walnut Creek, California, which owns more than \$25m. of shares in both BankAmerica and NationsBank.

Banc One Corp. and First Chicago NBD Corp. also have agreed to a \$30b. merger that will form the fifth-largest bank in the US, with assets of about \$270b.

NationsBank Chairman and Chief Executive Hugh McColl, 62, who has said for years he wants a California bank, will keep his titles. BankAmerica Chairman and Chief Executive David Coulter, 50, will be president and is to succeed McColl.

NationsBank, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, has branches in 16 states from Maryland to Texas. The company has grown through acquisitions in the 1990s, such as its pending \$15b. purchase of Barnett Banks Inc. of Jacksonville, Florida.

San Francisco-based BankAmerica is the biggest in the western US. It has about 1,875 branches stretching from Seattle to Houston, 7,700 automated teller machines, 14 million checking and savings accounts and \$55b. in commercial loans. Since Coulter became chairman two years ago, the bank's stock has more than doubled.

BankAmerica largely sat out the wave of mergers sweeping US banks. Instead, Coulter boosted profits by selling businesses that don't earn enough money.

BankAmerica just agreed to sell its manufactured home lending business to GreenPoint Financial Corp. for a premium of \$603m. to the unit's assets. The combined banks' assets, including those of Barnett, will vault the company to No. 1 in the US, ahead of Chase Manhattan Corp., the current leader, and Citicorp, the second-largest.

BankAmerica and NationsBank almost merged in 1995 when Richard Rosenberg was the San Francisco bank's CEO, people familiar with the matter said. BankAmerica backed out of the transaction when it became apparent that NationsBank would be in control, the people said.

The weakest spots for NationsBank and BankAmerica will be in midwestern and the northeastern US. Chase, Citicorp, First Union Corp., Fleet Financial Group Inc. and BankBoston Corp. dominate the region.

SIFE Trust's Buntain said BankAmerica's transaction puts pressure on Wells Fargo & Co., a California rival, to consider finding a partner. Wells Fargo stock rose more than 3% last week amid speculation it might be bought by such potential suitors as Minneapolis-based US Bancorp.

Both NationsBank and BankAmerica bought San Francisco-based investment banks in the past year.

Japan's Marubeni proposes \$450m. Negev plant

Japan's Marubeni company has set up initial contacts for forming an international consortium to set up a combined shale oil electricity and cement plant at Mishor Rotem in the Negev, at an estimated investment of \$450 million.

This development comes despite the fact that Mid Atlantic obtained a concession from the Israel Electric Corporation to set up a power station in the area.

Marubeni is part of a project at Mishor Rotem to manufacture cement from a byproduct of generating electricity from shale oil. Also associated with the project are Rohrbach Cement of Germany, the Israel Oil Refineries, Nesher, and Shale Oil Development.

About 18 months ago, Marubeni proposed setting up the combined

plant, but later Mid Atlantic was given an IEC concession to set up a power station.

Marubeni is of the opinion that a combined plant will reduce the project price by some \$100m. relative to the investments involved in setting up each project separately, which is estimated at \$250-300m. per project.

According to Marubeni's proposal, the consortium will consist of Germany's Rohrbach Cement (10%-15%), Marubeni (5%-10%) and Nesher. Initial contacts are also in progress with ABB, which is being offered a holding of 10%-20% of the project, transferred out of Nesher's share.

The possibility also is being explored of integrating Shale Oil Development into the project at a rate of 4% or acquiring its rights and know-how. (Globes)

As Israel prepares for liberalization:

Foreign banks eye potential investments

By DAVID HARRIS

Several foreign banks are currently examining possible investments here. Bank of Israel Foreign Currency Department head Sylvia Piterman said yesterday.

While Piterman said she is not prepared to reveal the names of those visiting, an industry source said four names are presently being mooted as potential new players inside Israel: London-based Coutts Bank, US-based Chase Manhattan Bank and Citibank, and Banque National de Paris.

The only foreign bank to have so far opened its doors for business here is ANZ from the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

Chase spokesman John Anderson was last night looking into the suggestion that his bank is considering investments here, most likely through Chase Capital Partners — the global private equity wing of the bank, with some \$4.5 billion under management.

Spokesmen for the other banks were unavailable because of the Easter holiday.

In November, Bank Leumi and Coutts signed an agreement under which both banks will

cooperate in the field of private banking. Coutts, a subsidiary of National Westminster Bank (NatWest Group), is the largest private banking organization in the world, with 40 offices in 16 countries and assets totaling \$50 billion.

Citibank, a subsidiary of Citicorp, opened a representative office here two years ago, and BNP also has a representative in Israel.

"Foreign banks are already investigating the market," Piterman said at the Bank of Jerusalem Business Forum. "However, they will enter the market slowly. As they themselves tell us, they will not jump into the 'swimming pool' before they check its depth."

The center of the banks' concerns is the nature of the liberalization package scheduled to be announced by the government and Bank of Israel on or around Independence Day.

Piterman warned the process that will lead to a fully convertible shekel will take some time and for it to have an economic impact could be an even lengthier period.

"Removing controls is a necessary condition for the convertibility of the shekel, but it is not a sufficient one," she said. "For a currency to be

convertible from an economic point of view, it has to become the legal tender of a country that has proven continuous political, macroeconomic, and financial stability. It has to achieve internal and external relative stability and must be traded in a liquid foreign exchange and money market."

"If we look at trends in Israel, we have made progress but we are not yet there. Clearly the process will take additional time."

During the meeting Bank of Jerusalem chairman Zalmay Shoval called for the liberalization measures to include greater freedoms for banks — in particular allowing commercial banks to operate insurance businesses.

The restrictions currently in place "keep us apart from the rest of the world," said Shoval. "Look at Citicorp and Sandy Weill's Travelers [which announced a merger last week]. But this will come too and we are eventually going to see not only those huge high-tech investments."

Meanwhile, the Israel Merchants Association yesterday wrote to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman expressing its full support for the liberalization program.

In bid to receive additional \$2.8b. in aid

Russia signs IMF economic plan

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russia has signed an economic policy statement that is key to unlocking International Monetary Fund financing this year, a senior central banker said yesterday.

Russia will borrow a total of \$2.8 billion from the IMF by the end of 1999, central bank First Deputy Chairman Sergei Alekshchenko said.

He said the acting prime minister and the central bank chairman had agreed to the plan, which has been eagerly awaited by foreign observers who see IMF relations with Russia as a sign of the health of Russian economic reform.

"On Saturday the statement on economic policy was signed," [Sergei] Kiriyenko and [Sergei] Dubinin signed it," Alekshchenko said. "Its approval will form the basis for continuing the extended financing facility in 1998-1999," Alekshchenko added in a statement.

The total sum of the credits, which Russia may

expect to receive by the end of the program, is two billion SDRs (Special Drawing Rights) — \$2.8b.

The 1998 plan generally follows previous Russia-IMF agreements and budget goals, but it had been held up by some disagreements, including whether Russia would offer tax cuts for major foreign investors, which the IMF's Moscow representative said the fund reluctantly agreed to.

Alekshchenko did not release the text of the statement but said Russia had promised to increase transparency at natural monopolies, including gas group Gazprom, electricity company UES, and the Railways Ministry.

Alekshchenko said the IMF board of directors would consider the 1998 plan in May, and Gilman has said a mission to study Russia's first quarter economic results, a prerequisite to disbursement of the next tranche, was expected in late April.

Japan readies to counter G7 criticism

By YOSHIKO MORI

TOKYO (Reuters) — Japan, under mounting international pressure to show up the ailing Asian economies — including its own — will tell tomorrow's Group of Seven (G7) meeting that its best cards are already on the table.

"Through the recent economic stimulus package, we have responded in a major way to what the G7 had been pressing for," a senior Japanese official told reporters last week ahead of a meeting of the G7's top monetary officials in Washington.

Japan is likely to respond to any criticism that it has let down its Asian neighbors by saying that it

has tried to help by boosting the value of its currency in recent days — a move it says is more vital than expanding its economy.

"Asian currencies, including the yen, have been overly weak against the dollar," the Japanese official said. "Taking into account the fact that the United States was running a massive trade deficit, it would be desirable not just for Asian economies but also for the United States to have a fall in the dollar against the Asian currencies," he added.

The Bank of Japan drove the dollar down by six yen, or some 4.5 percent, against the yen last week. The dollar has since recovered some losses to stand at around 129

yen in afternoon trade yesterday.

Bankers estimated that the BOJ spent well over \$10 billion in the forceful attempt to defend the Japanese currency.

Some officials at the Finance Ministry said the BOJ's persistent attempt to rein in the galloping dollar versus the yen reflected its belief that the regional economy is damaged less by Japan's slow growth than by the yen's weakness.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto brushed aside criticism that Japan was not acting as the growth engine for Asia when he attended a meeting of Asian and European leaders in London earlier this month.

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Building Blocks

By Nina Gilbert

During a period of real estate slowdown, there is an advantage for those who want to improve their living standard, according to Bernard Raskin, CEO of RE/MAX Israel. This is because the gap between the price of the apartment sold and the larger property purchased is smaller and less money has to be added.

According to the agency, properties that are especially attractive now are villas and cottages outside of urban areas. In Ramat Yishai, Zichron Ya'acov, and Ma'ayan five-room cottages with gardens can be purchased for between \$210,000 and \$230,000.

In Pardes Hanna, the agency has 200 sq.m. six-room cottages with 350 sq.m. gardens for \$230,000.

JERUSALEM AREA

Some 84 percent of all housing units that have been built or are under construction in Modi'in have been sold, which is much higher than the national average, according to a survey conducted by Business Data. In more than 70 percent of the projects in which there are still unsold apartments, the remaining apartments are four rooms or larger.

In 1997, apartment sales in the city grew by 46% compared with 1996, with prices rising an average of 3%. A total of 6,291 homes have been sold in the city, where some 16,000 people are living today.

In Jerusalem, on Sderot Herzl, a three-room, 90 sq.m. apartment was sold for \$200,000 by Narkis and Nadlan Plus via Shiran. The apartment, on the second floor, was sold after a month on the market.

Also via the Shiran multiple listing service, a seven-room cottage on Ramot's Rehov Ha'ahim Laharan was sold for \$375,000. The cottage, with 170 sq.m. on two stories and an extensive view and a 40 sq.m. garden. It was sold after two months on the market.

In Givat Ze'ev, a 80 sq.m. three-and-a-half room apartment on Rehov Hatzema was sold for \$145,000. The third-floor apartment was sold after six weeks.

TEL AVIV AND CENTER

The Mizrahi and Sons group is offering a discount of up to 5 percent and a NIS 150,000 loan

at 3.9% interest for all of its projects at a housing fair in Rishon LeZion, at its project in the west of the city, on Rehov Rahel Hameshoreret 45. The fair, which ends tonight, is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. All visitors will be treated to a bottle of wine.

A six-room, 170 sq.m. apartment with a roof on Rehov Kehilat Kobna in Neot Afeka was sold for \$785,000 by RE/MAX.

In Neveveh Avivim, a three-room, 100 sq.m. apartment on Rehov Tagur was sold by the agency for \$318,000. The apartment is on the fifth floor with an elevator.

On Tel Aviv's Derech Namir, a 95 sq.m., three-and-a-half-room apartment on the third floor with an elevator was sold for \$210,000 by Century 21. The asking price was \$225,000. The agency also sold a totally renovated, furnished, four-room apartment on Rehov Dresner in Ramat Aviv Gimmel for \$365,000.

The asking price for the 110 sq.m. apartment, on the fourth floor with elevator and parking, was \$410,000.

A 100 sq.m., three-room apartment with a 50 sq.m. roof in reasonable condition on Rehov Bar-Kochva, a quiet street near Rehov Dizengoff, was sold for \$300,000 by Century 21. The asking price for the apartment, on the fourth floor with an elevator, was \$340,000.

NORTH

Plots of agricultural land in Givat Ada, in the Binyamin area, are being marketed via a national tender (Hamichraz Hakaful). The 18 plots are each about 500 sq.m. and are being offered by Brodi Investments for the recommended price of \$24,000. Bids on the plots can be made starting at \$12,900.

Payment can be made in 36 installments on Visa and Diner's cards. Buyers must sign on a joint development agreement with the other owners to ensure the value of the land when it is re-zoned for building.

Company president Yisrael Brodi said the area is becoming especially attractive for building communities of cottages and is to be made more accessible by the construction of the Cross-Israel Highway and plans for expansion of railway lines.

That most liquid of assets

An innovative project proposes Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians treat water as just another economic commodity rather than a strategic asset. Skeptics, led by National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, disagree. Ora Koren reports

A carefully written, politely worded but otherwise terse letter, sent last month to Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman by National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, shocked its readers at the Treasury.

The letter dealt with a regional project which would pluck the highly explosive issue of water in the Middle East from the clutches of politicians and generals, and place it instead in the much less emotional and more practical hands of economists.

Conceived at Harvard University, the project was adopted first by former economics minister Yossi Beilin and then by former Finance Minister Dan Meridor, who in turn bequeathed it to Neeman.

Sharon's letter, however, amounted to a rejection of the economic thinking behind the project.

Sharon's stance had little to do with his famously controversial policies.

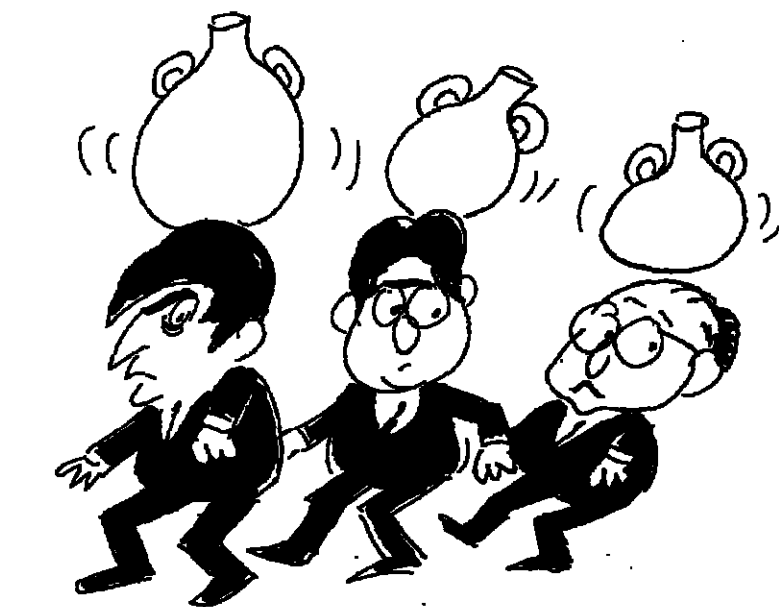
Rather, it echoed his experts' disagreement with the economic thinking behind the project that was designed on the tranquil and distant banks of Boston's Charles River.

Ultimately, Neeman relinquished his nominal responsibility for the project to Sharon who has promised to "reconsider" Israel's role.

Based on a host of research conducted at Harvard, MIT and the World Bank, the project concluded that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the Middle East has enough water reserves for all its inhabitants until the year 2020.

As for what should happen after that year, says the report, the region had better prepare for an era of desalination, along with all the physical infrastructure that sort of transition would involve and the financial solutions it would entail.

The problem with regional attitudes toward water, the research assumes, is that they reflexively perceive water as being limited in supply and priceless in value, rather than as just another commodity, which, with the right kind of economics, can be rationally and universally extracted, distributed and purchased.



MEIR RAVENHOF

More specifically, all the water disputes between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as of 1995 did not total more than \$110 million, and are not bound to exceed \$500m. by 2020, according to the study.

The proposal, therefore, is that the countries of the Middle East would together calculate the needs of an average regional resident, then determine the price of a cubic meter of natural, recycled or desalinated water, and ultimately trade in water according to the simple dictates of supply and demand.

A joint regional forum would supervise the water extraction, supply and revenues, which would be used to further increase regional water supplies.

During a ministerial gathering in the Hague in February 1996, Israel formally agreed to participate in the project, while Holland agreed to finance the scheme. To avoid the many political pitfalls which evidently awaited them, the participants decided to first set up teams which would collect data and devise methods for pricing water.

This is being done now, separately, by the three parties on both sides of the Jordan.

The Israeli team is made up of

representatives of the finance, foreign and infrastructure ministries.

This initial investigation was originally scheduled to be completed by the end of this year, and then be followed by an invitation by Harvard to launch various regional water cooperation projects.

The main problem is that in order to proceed from the exploratory to the operational stage, each participating party will be expected to divulge data concerning its water resources.

In Israel, at least, such information is still considered strategic secrets.

After much hesitation, Sharon stopped short of altogether shelving the project. In a recent tripartite meeting in the Hague he sent a representative, as did the Treasury.

The Israeli delegation, headed by Water Commissioner Meir Ben-Meir, told the forum that Israel views the project as an academic rather than practical scheme, and opposes it in general.

"I fully reject the approach which says that regional water problems can be solved on a purely economic basis," said Ben-Meir. "A strategic asset is

not a commodity," he added.

In Ben-Meir's thinking, a trans-border sharing of subterranean aquifers would ultimately erode Israel's strategic maneuver space in terms of food production.

"Once I cease to produce, food producers would be able to charge me anything," he said.

Another reason Ben-Meir rejects the concept is the problem of desertification.

In Ben-Meir's view, stopping the desert's encroachment on arable land is the kind of strategic goal which a purely economic attitude, of the sort espoused by the Harvard project, would inevitably fail to take into consideration.

Much along these pessimistic lines, Sharon thinks water cannot be distributed through an artificial mechanism of price fixing and quota allocating.

This is a view which Sharon already publicly presented a year ago, when former water commissioner Shaul Arlosorof submitted a report on Israel's water economy, in which he proposed to treat Israeli water as a purely economic challenge.

As it turned out, Arlosorof was also heading the Israeli party to the Harvard project, a fact which

did nothing to assuage Sharon's hostility to the project.

Still, being the arch-tactician he is so well-known as, Sharon refrained from mounting an immediate and open assault on the plan, despite his belief that it has potentially dangerous implications for Israel's water supplies. Sharon has chosen instead to say that he is merely "studying" it.

Canceling Israel's participation in a project that has been under way for two years could damage the commanding role Sharon has so painstakingly built in Israel's tricky relations with Jordan.

Appointed by the government to lead all joint economic projects with the Palestinians, as well as with Egypt and Jordan, withdrawing from the Harvard project would also discredit Sharon the PA.

For now, the Harvard project's supporters are expected to lobby Sharon in an effort to convert him to their cause. Should they fail,

Israel and the PA could begin talks on a permanent settlement, with the added burden of yet another highly sensitive issue on an agenda already heavily weighed down by other contentious issues.

The future is here

With only 261 days left to the launch of the European Monetary Union, Israelis should prepare themselves for a new reality

Many people believe that North America is Israel's largest trading partner but, in fact, most of our bilateral trade is conducted with European countries. This ignorance concerning Europe's influence on the Israeli economy may partly explain why a large part of the local business sector has not yet started taking the necessary steps towards preparing for the era of a single European currency. This is especially relevant for Israeli companies dealing with Europe.

As the European Monetary Union gains momentum, the issue is becoming more relevant with economists predicting that Europe will become a dominant power affecting global trade. Such a step is expected also to increase Europe's political power and lead in turn to higher involvement in political issues, including the Israeli-Arab conflict.

With only 261 days left to the completion of all the necessary steps, the local business sector should start preparing itself for a new reality in which, as of January 1, 1999, all European nations, except for the U.K., Denmark, Sweden and Greece, will adopt a common European currency.

The March 25 recommendation from the EU Commission and the European Monetary Institute that all 11 candidates - Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg - be allowed to participate in the first phase of the EMU, further reinforces the urgency to start preparing

for the new situation.

Figures published by the Central Bureau of Statistics show that while trade volume with North America totaled \$3.57 billion in the first quarter of 1998, trade with Europe amounted to some \$6.38b., of which \$5.31b. was bilateral trade with the European Union.

As Europe is clearly Israel's largest trading partner, the local business community needs to adopt a different attitude towards the proposed introduction of the euro, Europe's single currency.

The Bank of Israel's Foreign Currency Department has recently ranked the effects of the currency union on different countries.

According to the report, Israel, together with other countries in the Middle East and Asia, is positioned behind those European countries which are not included in the European Union, such as Switzerland and the Eastern European countries. The Central Bank predicts, however, that Israel would be more affected by this move than the countries of North and South America and Africa.

Israel wasn't ranked together with the European countries, despite Israel's desire for greater integration into Europe, because a large part of its trade is conducted with the U.S. In addition, the dollar is the most dominant currency in Israeli trading, unlike the countries of Eastern Europe which conduct most of their trading in German marks.

The grading of Israel was also affected by the fact that most of

MARKET WATCH

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Israel's external debt is in dollars.

A document published by the Israel Export Institute states that the first industry to be affected by the currency unification is the financial sector. The implementation of the euro is expected to accelerate the already strong consolidation trend of banks and insurance companies.

The authors of the Export Institute report, Pinchas Landu and Avi Temkin, predict that foreign financial institutions will start offering their services to Israeli clients, even without opening local branches.

In the age of direct banking and insurance, European institutions will be able to offer their services online, through the Internet or by phone and fax. This trend is expected to gain further momentum following the implementation of the foreign currency liberalization, which will lead to full convertibility of the shekel and will lift restrictions limiting investments overseas.

Other sectors which are expected to be affected are tourism and industry. With a majority of tourists to Israel coming from Europe, the local tourism industry must prepare itself for a new reality and move from offering prices in dollars to presenting them in euros. Such a step would prevent a situation in which the whole industry would suffer from sharp fluctuations in the

exchange rate of the dollar against the euro. This step should be taken as soon as possible, as the euro is expected to be very volatile in the first few months.

The monetary union is also creating technical problems for Israeli companies. One of the most important questions which should be solved is the conversion of information systems to the use of a single currency. Computer experts predict that the costs of such a conversion will be even higher than those of converting software to meet the millennium problem.

During an interim period, which could last until July 2002, the companies who deal with European countries would have to work with both the currency of the local country and the euro. According to conservative estimates, the European banking industry will have to spend at least \$10b. over the next three years on getting the systems ready for the single currency.

There is no doubt that, although the costs for the Israeli financial industry would be significantly lower than the Europeans' cost, the problem would nevertheless require massive investment.

The implications of the currency union may not be evident yet, but the monetary union can also affect private households. Besides having to consider whether to link saving plans and deposits to the euro rather than to the dollar, Israelis should also start thinking about investing in Europe.

The planned introduction of the currency liberalization on April 30,

Independence Day, would allow residents to invest abroad. If all goes according to plan, Israelis will soon have access to the enormous liquid capital markets of a united economic area 50 percent bigger than Japan and not much smaller than the U.S.

In a report published by Merrill Lynch last month, chief European equity strategist David Bowers, said that the euro has the potential to become a dominant global currency that could supersede the Japanese yen as the world's second-most important currency. The American investment house also believes that once it has established a reliable track record, the euro may become a new reserve currency which could challenge the dominance of the dollar in world trade.

In addition, Europe's bond and stock markets may soon rival those of the U.S.

If this happens, Israeli companies, which in the past rushed to raise money in the U.S., may consider offering shares in Europe. The geographical distance and the time differences are certainly in favor of such a move.

It should be noted, however, that there are still potential stumbling blocks on the way to a full European monetary union. But who knows, maybe the integration of Israel in the European zone, currently limited to Israeli football and basketball teams competing in the European championships, will be extended allowing local companies to play as equals on the European court.

THE CONFERENCE CIRCUIT

By GILBERT JAY CASIMAN

14.4 The 34th annual Engineering Conference will take place at the Haifa Technion.

In addition to the strictly professional papers to be presented during the two-day event, Dr. Yehoshua Gleitman, managing director of Ampal will talk about 50 years of industrial development in Israel.

19.4 Professor Ilan Solomon of the Hebrew University's Geography Department will coordinate the Fourth NECTAR (Network on European Communications and Transport Activities Research) Conference at Kibbutz Shefayim.

This is the first time that Israel has been chosen as the venue. Some 60 participants from all over Europe will present papers on transportation issues. The conference concludes on April 23.

20.4 To celebrate its authority to award first degrees in computer studies, Shenkar College in conjunction with People and Computers will host a conference on Computer Education in Academia in the 21st Century. The conference will examine the needs of industry, the possibility of conducting a virtual university; the lack of adequately trained human resources in the year 2000 and other related issues.

22.4 The Financial Institute of Israel has brought together a group of bankers and academics from Israel and abroad to discuss Value at Risk.

Zeev Abeles, the Supervisor of Banks will open the debate which is taking place at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv.

26.4 The Women's Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University in conjunction with women's studies programs of TAU's faculties of humanities, social sciences and the arts will hold its sixth annual conference on feminist research under the theme of The

Conflicting Paths of Men and Women. The conference will be held at TAU's Gilman Building.

26.4 A large segment of Israel's high finance leaders will converge at Gan Oranim in Tel Aviv to discuss the future of Fuel and Energy in this country, with particular emphasis on policies to be introduced or enacted in the year 2000.

7.5 Would women negotiate peace differently? This is one of the questions which speakers at The 13th Feminists Conference at Ramat Etal will attempt to answer.

During the three-day meet, Jewish, Moslem and Christian participants will discuss subjects such as the challenge of building a multi-cultural women's movement; feminist activities separately and together in terms of cooperation between various feminist organizations; utopia vs. reality; women in religious roles; and women in politics.

21.5 Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman and Governor of the Bank of Israel Yacov Frenkel will be the guests of honor at the 14th annual conference of The Israel Economic Association to be held at the Jerusalem International Convention Center.

Amongst the wide-ranging subjects scheduled for discussion are Israel's banking network; reforming the pension system; Israel's labor market; taxation theories and policies; inflation and monetary policies; the Palestinian economy; quality of the environment; financing local authorities; the economics of health; public policy on R & D plus many other controversial issues.

2.5 The 31st national convention of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel will celebrate 100 years of North American aliyah at the Ramat Rachel Conference Center, Jerusalem.

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Florida (Palm)	10,000	-0.08575
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Food Wheeler	30,3125	-0.3125
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Galaxy Tech	11,125	-0.25
Galaxy 2000	1,000	-0.34375
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Devils get late tie with Panthers

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) — Brendan Morrison scored the tying goal at 12:16 of the third period to help the New Jersey Devils salvage a 5-5 tie with the Florida Panthers on Sunday.

Morrison scored his fourth goal in five games since his recall from Albany of the AHL on April 2. The rookie wristed a rising shot from the slot past Kirk McLean to close out the scoring in the surprisingly wide-open contest. It was only the third time this season the defensive-minded Devils allowed five or more goals.

The Devils, who have already clinched the top playoff seed in the Eastern Conference, have won only two of their last seven games (2-4-1). New Jersey also got goals from Petr Sykora, Steve Thomas, Brian Rolston and Scott Stevens.

Ray Whitney scored twice for the Panthers who extended their unbeaten streak to three (1-0-2). The Panthers also got goals from Dino Ciccarelli, Viktor Kozlov and Robert Svehla.

Coyotes 2, Blackhawks 1
Jeremy Roenick's unassisted goal with 7:20 left in the game helped visiting Phoenix clinch a playoff berth. Roenick, a former Blackhawk,

pounced on a bad pass by Chicago defenseman Gary Suter and ripped a 30-foot shot past goaltender Jeff Hackett to break a 1-1 tie.

Murray Baron scored his first goal of the season for the Coyotes (33-34-12), who moved into sole possession of sixth place in the Western Conference with 78 points.

Tony Amonte had a power-play goal for the Blackhawks, whose post-season hopes were all but extinguished. Chicago (30-37-12), which has lost four straight, remained in ninth place in the West with 72 points.

Stars 4, Blues 3
Pat Verbeek broke a tie with a power-play goal in the third period as host Dallas improved its chances

for winning the Presidents' Trophy. With a franchise-record 105 points, the Stars took a one-point lead over the New Jersey Devils for the best record in the NHL. The Devils earlier tied Florida 5-5 to boost their point total to 104. The idle Detroit Red Wings were third at 103.

St. Louis rallied from a two-goal deficit to tie the game at 2 after only 42 seconds had been played in the third period on Steve Duchesne's power-play goal. But a slashing call against St. Louis' Chris McAlpine 30 seconds later gave Dallas a power play and Verbeek capitalized for the go-ahead goal eight seconds into the advantage when he converted Sergei Zubov's goalmouth pass.

First Period—None. Second Period—1. Chicago, Amonte 29 (Cichowski, Suter), 10:40 (pp). 2. Phoenix, Baron 1 (Roenick), 12:04. Third Period—3. Phoenix, Roenick, 2:12. 4. Dallas, Goles—Phoenix, Khabibulin, Chicago, Hackett. A-17,822.

St. Louis 0 1 2-3
Dallas 4 2 1-5
First Period—None. Second Period—1. Dallas, Nazemvsky 28 (Adams, Verbeek), 2:12 (pp). 2. Dallas, Zubov 10 (Duchene, Adams), 10:56 (pp). 3. St. Louis, Campbell 22 (Duchene, Prosser), 12:47. Third Period—1. St. Louis, Duchesne 1 (Turgeon, Hull), 4:22 (pp). 2. Dallas, Verbeek 2 (Zubov, Sykora), 12:00 (pp). 3. Dallas, Nease 10 (Carmichael, Vachek), 10:45. 7. St. Louis, Deming 20 (Turgeon), 13:22 (pp). Dallas, St. Louis, McLeannan, Dallas, Belfour, A-18,928.

EASTERN CONFERENCE					
Atlantic Division					
	W	L	T	Pts	GF
New Jersey	47	22	10	104	218
Philadelphia	41	26	11	93	232
Washington	36	30	12	84	209
A.I. Islanders	28	39	11	67	204
N.Y. Rangers	23	38	18	64	190
Florida	24	41	14	62	196
Tampa Bay	17	52	9	43	146

WESTERN CONFERENCE					
Central Division					
	W	L	T	Pts	GF
Dallas	47	21	11	105	234
St. Louis	44	29	8	92	239
Phoenix	33	34	12	78	215
Chicago	30	37	12	72	188
Toronto	28	42	9	65	186

Dele Debola's 90th-minute goal. But City, who are still drawing 30,000 crowds to Maine Road, stayed a point above the relegation zone as the bottom three — Portsmouth, Stoke and Reading — also lost.

Watford clinched promotion from division two after drawing 1-1 at promoted Bristol City yesterday.

Watford were guaranteed promotion when third-placed Grimsby lost 2-1 at home to Bristol Rovers.

Division three leaders Notts County secured promotion two weeks ago but the battle to join them is getting tighter, with Macclesfield, Torquay, Colchester, Scarborough and Barnet leading the chase for the remaining two automatic spots.

England may drop support for Johansson

LONDON (AP) — England may withdraw its support for Lennart Johansson's campaign to become FIFA president because of his backing for Germany's bid for the 2006 World Cup.

The Football Association agreed in principle to back the UEFA president's bid last year when he was the only candidate for the FIFA post.

But the Swede's public backing for Germany has led the FA to rethink its position and possibly throw its support behind the only other candidate, FIFA secretary general Joseph "Sepp" Blatter.

England is competing with Germany, South Africa, Brazil and possibly others in the race for the 2006 World Cup.

The FIFA election is scheduled for June 8 in Paris on the eve of the World Cup.

"Johansson has put us in a very difficult position," said Alec McGivern, head of England's World Cup bid. "He is aware of that and our FA executive will make the decision in May on how we cast our vote."

"I think it is unfortunate that any candidate should be announcing a view on a decision that has to be taken in two years' time. I would like to feel that any FIFA president would publicly detach themselves from either bid. I think that is what they would do but it has put us in a bit of a dilemma."

England's bid received the personal backing last month of outgoing FIFA president Joao Havelange.

SPORTS

in brief

United put Cruyff in bid for Stam, report

LONDON (Reuters) — Manchester United have offered unsettled Jordi Cruyff in a player-plus-cash bid to sign center-back Jaap Stam from PSV Eindhoven. The Express said on yesterday.

PSV have reportedly put a £15 million price tag on Stam. The Express said United chairman Martin Edwards, who held talks with the Dutch club last week, had offered £9 million plus Cruyff for the highly-rated 25-year-old.

Stam said earlier this year he wanted to join United and The Express said the player was angered that PSV appeared to be blocking his move.

Cruyff, son of former Dutch idol Johan, has failed to win a regular first team place at United since joining them from Barcelona for £1.4 million two years ago.

He has not started a game since October and his last appearance as a substitute was in February.

Third time lucky for Pierce at Amelia Island

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (Reuters) — The third time proved to be the charm for fourth seed Mary Pierce, who won the Bausch & Lomb Championships on Sunday by beating sixth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

Pierce, runner-up here the past two years, dominated the final two sets to claim the title with a 6-7 (8-10), 6-0, 6-2 triumph.

Pierce, who is 13-2 for the year and won the Paris Indoors title in February, earned \$79,000 for the victory that saw her world ranking climb to No. 5 yesterday.

The ninth-ranked Martinez, who reached the Australian Open final in January, saw her title drought reach 27 consecutive tournaments. Martinez has 28 career titles, including Wimbledon in 1994, but she hasn't won a tournament since Moscow in November of 1996.

Caesarea golf

This week's tournament at the Caesarea Golf Club was the K-C Alliance two best ball stableford competition.

Tal Bildman, David Shlosberg, Herbert Alon and Harry Brodie had a 14 under par 86 stableford points to clinch the first place.

Three points behind with 83 were Hadassa Alon, Roz Brodie, Dan Levron and Amis Amir. Nathan Soltski had the best individual stableford score of 40 points, four under par.

Shimon Grunin scored a hole in one on the 160-meter par three 15th using a five-iron.

Heather Chait

ARSENAL

Continued from Page 20

The Swedish international pounced on a rebound five minutes before halftime after Alan Shearer had hit the bar.

Jan Age Fjortoft equalized early in the second half for battling Bamsley but Shearer grabbed the winner four minutes from time.

Tottenham were also on course for three points when Italian Nicola Bertini headed in a David Ginola corner in the 68th minute.

But Dion Dublin made it 1-1 in the 86th minute.

It looks all over for bottom-placed

Crystal Palace, whose 2-1 defeat at Liverpool left them 10 points adrift of safety with just four games left.

Palace's Marcus Bent cancelled out Oyvind Leonhardsen's opener but young David Thompson won it for Liverpool with his first senior goal in the 85th minute.

It was nowhere near as close for Bolton who crashed 4-0 at Derby, all the goals coming in the first half. Two from Dean Burton and one each from Paolo Wanchope and Francesco Baiano left third-bottom Bolton two points behind Tottenham.

The premier league's other game between hosts Sheffield Wednesday and West Ham finished 1-1.

First division leaders Nottingham

Forest chalked up their second 3-0 victory in three days — this one against Wolverhampton — to move closer to a return to the premier league at the first attempt.

Forest are now eight points clear of their three closest pursuers Sunderland, Charlton and Middlesbrough, with the top two gaining automatic promotion.

Charlton have played a game more, leaving the two north-east clubs likely to battle it out for the remaining automatic spot with the loser going into the four-team play-off.

It is just as tight at the bottom of the first division with Manchester City still not safe after losing 1-0 at home to Birmingham yesterday after

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Barred buzzer-beater wins for Heat



MIAMI (AP) — Allan Houston's last-second shot was disallowed when the officials ruled it occurred after the buzzer, and the Miami Heat defeated the New York Knicks 82-81 in a disputed finish Sunday.

The Knicks stormed toward referee Bob Delaney when he indicated the basket didn't count, and coach Jeff Van Gundy ripped off his coat in anger. Television replays indicated Houston released the shot with one-tenth of a second left.

But the Heat won, thanks to three baskets by Tim Hardaway in the final two minutes, and reduced the chances that the two rivals will meet in the first round of the playoffs.

Hardaway finished with 21 points. Alonzo Mourning had 22 points and 13 rebounds. Houston led New York with 21 points.

Hornets 88, Pistons 86
Host Charlotte kept alive its fading hopes for homecourt advantage in the first round of the playoffs as Anthony Mason powered the Hornets past Detroit.

Mason matched his season-high with 29 points and added 14 rebounds and four assists, helping Charlotte snap a four-game losing streak.

The Hornets maintained a one-game lead over Atlanta in the battle for the fourth seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Grant Hill had 17 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for Detroit, giving him six double-doubles and two triple-doubles in 12 games.

SuperSonics 103, Rockets 95
Hersey Hawkins scored 20 points, Detlef Schrempf had 16 points and a season-high 15 rebounds and host Seattle defeated Houston in a possible first-round

playoff preview.
Hawkins scored 16 points in the third period when the Sonics (59-30) took the lead for good. Seattle trails Utah (59-19) by one game in the loss column in the battle for best record in the West, with the winner likely to meet the Rockets in the first round.

Kevin Willis led Houston with 28 points and Clyde Drexler added 25.

Hawks 91, Wizards 81
Eldridge Recasner came off the bench to score 10 of his 17 points in the final period, and Steve Smith had 18 as the Hawks rallied from a 14-point deficit to win on the road.

The Hawks, who have won five of seven, held the Wizards to two points over the final 6:33.

Washington is 0-3 since a sexual assault complaint was filed against Chris Webber and Juwan Howard, with two of those games coming after Rod Strickland suffered a season-ending leg injury.

Nets 116, Raptors 109
Keith Van Horn scored a season-

high 33 points. Kerry Kittles added 31 and visiting New Jersey played a perfect final three minutes to move into seventh place in the Eastern Conference.

The Nets (42-36), winners of five straight and seven of their last nine, moved one-half game ahead of the New York Knicks.

The Nets went 5-for-5 from the field and 8-for-8 from the line over the final three minutes. Sam Cassell added 25 points for New Jersey.

Dee Brown finished with 30 for Toronto, including 18 points on 3-pointers.

Pacers 93, Celtics 87
Antonio Davis scored a season-high 28 points and visiting Indiana ran its winning streak to four games.

Pacers coach Larry Bird, who led the Celtics to three NBA championships in the 1980s as a player, got a mild ovation before the game — nothing compared with the rousing welcome he received January 18 in his first game in Boston as Indiana's

coach.
Indiana (55-23) maintained its half-game lead over Miami (55-24). The team with the better record would have homecourt advantage if they meet in the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Suns 129, Grizzlies 106
George McCloud scored a season-high 25 points as visiting Phoenix won its eighth straight and moved into a tie for fourth place in the West.

Antonio McDysid chipped in with 23 points and seven rebounds as six Suns players reached double figures in scoring.

McCloud, who made a season-high 11 field goals and pulled down eight rebounds, made his second straight start since taking over for the ailing Danny Manning, who suffered a season-ending knee injury Tuesday at Sacramento.

The Suns heated up early, hitting 14 of their first 15 shots to build a 30-12 lead seven minutes into the game.



RAMBLING ROSE — Pacers' Jalen Rose (r) grabs the jersey of Celtics' Ron Mercer as Rose goes out of bounds chasing a loose ball. Indiana won 93-87.

EASTERN CONFERENCE					WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division					Midwest Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB
x-Miami	53	24	.688	—	x-Utah	59	19	.756	—
New Jersey	42	36	.538	12 1/2	y-San Antonio	53	25	.679	6
New York	42	37	.532	13	y-Minnesota	42	36	.538	17
Orlando	39	40	.494	16	y-Houston	46	32	.594	10 1/2
Washington	38	40	.487	16 1/2	Dallas	29	59	.329	39 1/2
Boston	35	43	.449	19 1/2	San Jose	18	60	.231	41
Philadelphia	30	49	.380	25	Denver	10	68	.128	49
Central Division					Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB
x-Chicago	60	18	.769	—	y-Seattle	59	20	.747	—
y-Indiana	55	23	.705	5	y-L.A. Lakers	57	21	.731	1 1/2
y-Charlotte	48	30	.615	12	y-Phoenix	53	25	.679	5 1/2
y-Atlanta	47	31	.603	13	y-Portland	44	34	.564	14 1/2
y-Cleveland	45	33	.577	15	Sacramento	27	51	.344	31 1/2
Memphis	35	43	.449	25	Golden State	16	62	.205	42 1/2
Detroit	35	44	.443	25 1/2	L.A. Clippers	16	62	.205	42 1/2
Toronto	15	63	.192	45					

x-clinched division title, y-clinched playoff spot, z-clinched conference title

Marlins' drought reaches 11

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Florida Marlins' 0-for-April streak continued Sunday when Jermaine Allensworth singled in three of Pittsburgh's first four runs, and Jason Schmidt pitched seven effective innings to lead the Pirates to a 7-3 victory.

Padres 4, Diamondbacks 2
Ken Caminiti homered in his fourth straight game, a 439-foot shot to straightaway center, and host San Diego won its seventh straight.

The Padres matched the best start in club history, equaling the 10-2 mark of the 1984 club, which reached the World Series.

Braves 3, Phillies 2
Tom Glavine allowed six hits in eight innings and Ryan Klesko homered as visiting Atlanta ended Philadelphia's five-game winning streak.

Mets 6, Brewers 4
John Olerud hit a two-run homer in the top of the seventh inning

and reliever Turk Wendell picked up his third win.

Expos 4, Cubs 1
Rookie Brad Fullmer went 4-for-4 and drove in four runs, as host Montreal spoiled Kerry Wood's major league debut.

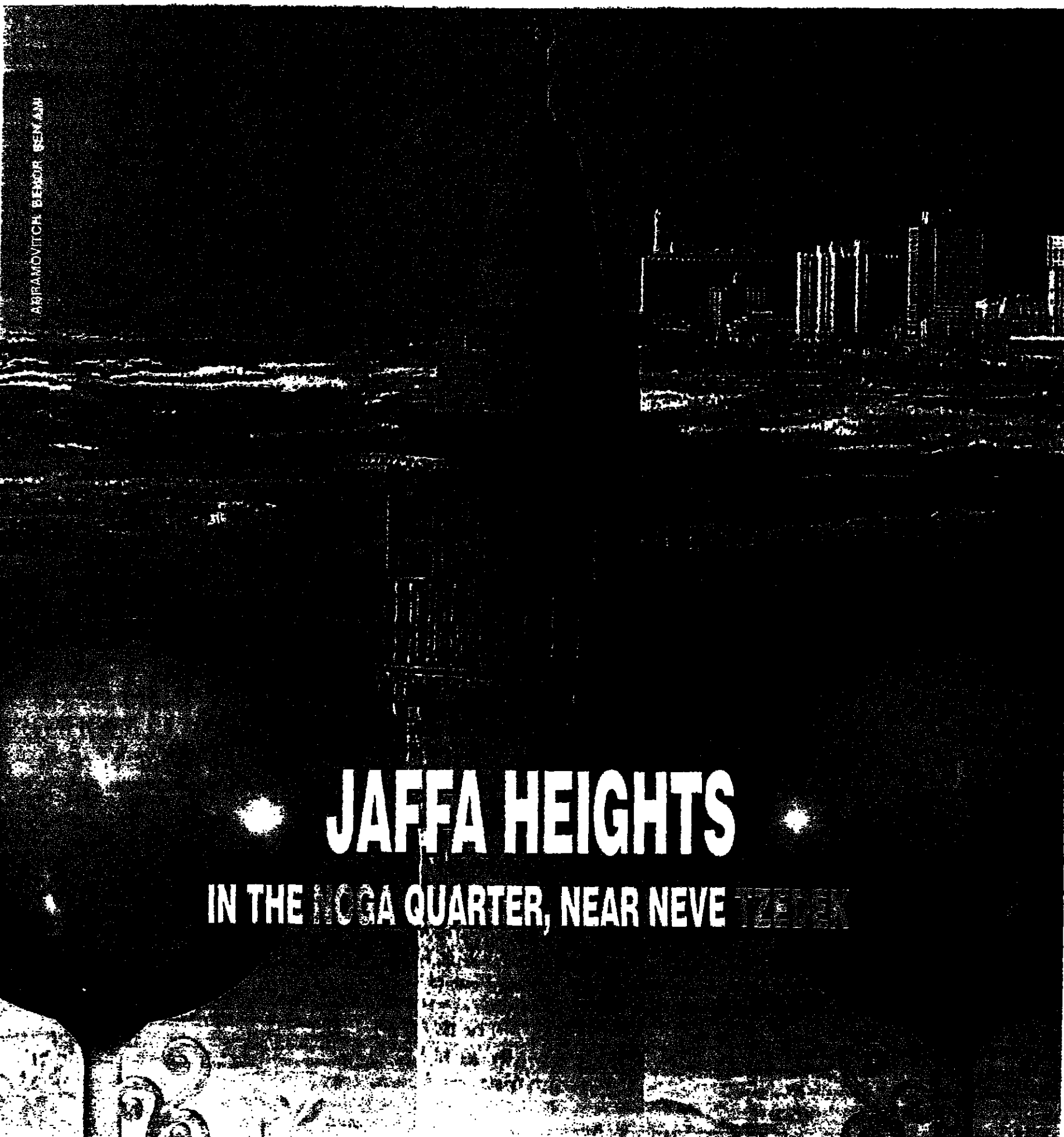
Reds 10, Rockies 4
Bret Boone hit his first career grand slam and Pete Harnisch blanked host Colorado through five innings.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Yankees 7, Athletics 5
Bernie Williams hit a go-ahead, two-run single in the sixth inning and Darryl Strawberry hit his third homer as host New York won its fifth straight.

Red Sox 8, Mariners 7
Jim Leyritz's second home run tied it in the bottom of the ninth and pinch-hitter Reggie Jefferson singled in the game-winning Alex Rodriguez hit two homers and Ken Griffey Jr. hit one for Seattle, to extend their losing streak to five.

AMERICAN LEAGUE					NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division					East Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB
New York	7	4	.636	—	Baltimore	9	2	.818	—
Philadelphia	6	4	.600	1	New York	6	4	.600	2 1/2
Atlanta	6	5	.545	1 1/2	Tampa Bay	6	4	.600	2 1/2
Minnesota	3	8	.273	4 1/2	Boston	6	5	.545	3
Florida	1	11	.091	6 1/2	Toronto	4	7	.364	5
Central Division					Central Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB
Chicago	8	4	.667	—	Cleveland	8	2	.800	—
St. Louis	7	4	.636	1	Minnesota	6	5	.545	2 1/2
Pittsburgh	7	4	.636	1	Chicago	4	6	.400	4
Houston	7	4	.636	1	Kansas City	4	7	.364	4 1/2
Cincinnati	6	6	.500	2	Detroit	3	7	.300	5
West Division					West Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB		W	L	Pct.	GB
San Diego	7	2	.778	—	Los Angeles	6	4	.600	—
San Francisco	7	5	.583	1 1/2	San Diego	6	4	.600	—
Los Angeles	5	6	.455	3 1/2	Los Angeles	5	5	.500	1 1/2
Colorado	4	9	.308	4 1/2	San Francisco	5	5	.500	1 1/2
Arizona	2	10	.167	6 1/2	Colorado	2	7	.222	3 1/2



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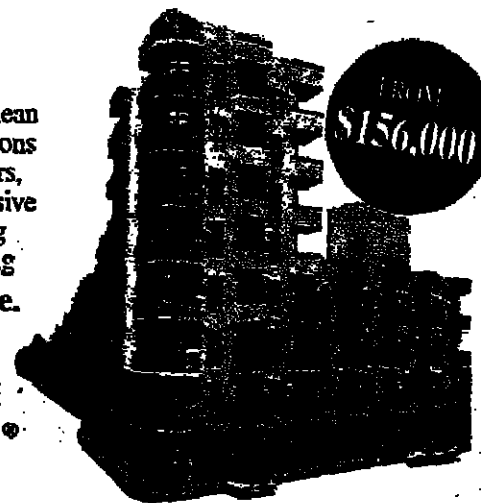
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CRITICS' CHOICE

PESSAH

HELEN KAYE

If you're in the Haifa Port area today, then go to *Zamer Le'Aliva*, a multimedia extravaganza put on by the Haifa Municipality, the Jubilee Committee and the Children's Theater Festival, celebrating 50 years of immigration via song, dance, fireworks, the lot. Should be fun and the fee is only NIS 10. At the Haifa Port tonight and tomorrow at 8 p.m.

THEATER

HELEN KAYE

The Yiddishpiel Theater is a guest at the Ganeri this week, and tonight it's Ya'acov Bodo in his comic monologue *Aleim die meschum rein*. Bodo, one of the true veterans of the Yiddish stage, gives the real flavor of *mamaloschen* in his voice and his body. On the main stage at 8:30 p.m.

Up the road at Habimah, the Sephardic lingua franca, Ladino, is at the heart of *Bustan Saradi*, a nostalgic and musical look at the daily lives of Jerusalem's Sephardi Jews in the early years of the century. OK, so the show is unabashedly kitsch, but it tugs at the heart just like it's supposed to. Tonight at 5 and 8:30 (in Hebrew).

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

Mendi Rodan leads the Israel Sinfonietta Beersheba in Bizet's *Symphony in C*, Debussy's *Petite Suite* and Faure's *Pavane*, while pianist Avram Reichert joins to play the Saint-Saens second piano concerto tonight at the Henry Crown Symphony Hall in Jerusalem (8:30).



Susanna Foretsky sings Pergolesi's 'Stabat Mater' in Jerusalem.

This evening's Chamber Music Gems festival at the International Church on Haneyim St. in Jerusalem features this evening (8) Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Larissa Tenuev and Susanna Foretsky as soloists (8 p.m.). Tomorrow night's program at the same locale and same time showcases violinist Mikhail Bezverkhy playing music by Ysaye, Paganini, Wieniawski and Sarasate. On Thursday morning (11:30) Bezverkhy plays Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and on Saturday the festival concludes with the Cherubini *Requiem* performed with the Musica Eterna vocal ensemble.

TV

CHANNEL 1 (11)

6:30 News Flash

6:31 News in Arabic

6:45 Good Morning Israel

EDUCATIONAL TV (11)

8:00 Dog Channel

10:00 Reason Studio

10:10 Fairy Tale Theater

11:10 Glad Days

11:25 South by Southeast

12:15 Moby

12:45 Dog Channel

14:20 Running the Halls

15:00 Escape from Jupiter

CHANNEL 1 (11)

15:30 Elie Ele and Zap 1

15:35 X Men

16:00 Byker Grove

16:30 Non-Stop Toppi

16:59 A New Evening

17:34 The Prince and the Pauper

18:00 Elie Ele

18:15 News in English

ARABIC PROGRAMS

18:20 News in Arabic

18:30 Doctors Talk

18:40 News

HEBREW PROGRAMS

18:20 News in Hebrew

18:31 Choosing the Jubilee Song

19:53 Filmed on the

20:00 News

20:05 Mine Host Meni

20:15 Loto Draw

22:00 Brooklyn South

22:05 First Person

22:25 Filmed on the

23:30 News

00:00 Verse of the Day

CHANNEL 2 (22)

5:45 Today's Programs

5:55 On the Edge of the Shell

6:43 Freshet Morning

00:00 Meetings

10:00 Pablo

11:00 Subad

12:00 Ahlan

Wasahalan

12:30 End Bytton

Adventure Story

13:00 Bopogie Diner

13:30 Home and Away

14:00 Junior News

14:20 Sesame Street

14:50 Best Video Clips

16:00 The Bold and the Beautiful

16:50 Different Driving

17:00 Five with Reshet

17:30 New Zeh Zeh

18:00 Dream On You

18:30 Family and a Hall

19:00 Fame L.A.

20:00 The Jerry Springer Show

20:31 IDF 1

21:05 Candid Camera

21:50 Dan Strain Live

22:00 Oz - Part 6

00:00 News

00:05 Oz, cont'd

00:40 Mission Impossible

01:30 On the Edge of the Shell

CHANNEL TV (31)

(unconfirmed)

17:00 Holy Koran

17:10 Cray

17:30 Caran the

18:00 To Know More

19:00 Magazine

19:30 Bordun

20:00 Le Journal

20:30 News in Hebrew

20:35 Game Show

21:00 What Would You Do?

21:30 Encounters

22:00 Magazine

22:10 Acapulco Bay

23:00 News in English

23:30 Movie

CABLE

ITV 3 (33)

16:00 Cartoons

16:30 Amores

17:30 Parel in Arabic

18:00 Elie Ele

18:15 News in English

ETV 2 (22)

15:30 Riding High

16:00 Teen Dramas

17:00 Arabic Tales

18:00 Parel in Arabic

18:30 Elie Ele

18:45 News in English

ETV 3 (33)

16:00 Cartoons

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ETV 3 (33)

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Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Edgbaston plans floodlit World Cup

BIRMINGHAM (Reuters) - Warwickshire County Cricket Club are hoping to stage one of next year's World Cup games under floodlights at Edgbaston.

The Birmingham ground will be the venue for three World Cup matches, including one of the semifinals.

Warwickshire's general committee meet today to ratify plans to erect permanent floodlights at Edgbaston. "We've spoken to local residents and have encountered no opposition to installing permanent lights," said chief executive Dennis Amis.

Warwickshire have already arranged to switch four of this summer's Sunday League fixtures to mid-week night matches under temporary lighting.

O'Meara wins Masters with late charge

AUGUSTA, Ga. (Reuters) - Mark O'Meara proved that patience and perseverance pay off when he came from behind with a dramatic birdie putt on the last hole to win the Masters by one stroke on Sunday.

O'Meara pushed his way into a tie for the lead with a birdie at 17, and then rolled in a pretty 18-foot putt on the 72nd hole of the tournament to foil the playoff hopes of Fred Couples and David Duval and claim his first major championship.

"I had to remain patient and focused on what I had to do out there. I really held together mentally, physically and emotionally," said the 41-year-old Tour veteran, whose brilliant finish capped a five-under-par 67 for a nine-under 279 winning total.

"This is my biggest day," O'Meara enthused. "The way I played the last few holes was the key for me." O'Meara earned \$576,000 and the coveted green jacket - presented by last year's champion, his good friend and neighbor Tiger Woods - for his victory on a perfect day for golf at Augusta National.

"The golfing gods were definitely on my side today," said O'Meara.

It was a spectacular day at Augusta with the sun shining and the wind calm, and the huge galleries were treated with a scintillating scramble for the title and an inspiring performance by Masters legend Jack Nicklaus.

The 58-year-old Nicklaus, playing in his 40th successive Masters, made Bobby Jones's course thunder with the roars that met his remarkable front-nine charge.

Nicklaus birdied the par-5 second hole, chipped in for birdie at the third, shrugged off a bogey at the fourth and birdied the sixth and seventh to leap into contention. He improved by one more stroke on the back nine to finish tied for sixth at five-under 283, just four shots from O'Meara.

Couples and Duval duelled for the lead for most of the back nine, with 1992 champion Couples plunging with a double-bogey seven at the 13th and scoring with an eagle-3 at the 15th.

Duval reached nine under par with a birdie



IF THE JACKET FITS - Masters winner Mark O'Meara gets a helping hand from Tiger Woods in donning his new Green Jacket at Augusta yesterday.

At 15th, but gave away a stroke by taking three putts at the par-3 16th.

He was watching on a television monitor in the Eisenhower Cabin, standing eight under par and waiting to see what Couples and O'Meara would do as the last pair of the day headed for the final hole.

O'Meara had lurked just off the lead all the way through Amen Corner before turning it on with birdies on three of the last four holes. He started his move to victory with a birdie at the 15th to reach seven under. A six-foot birdie putt at the 17th hole tied him with Duval and Couples.

At 18, O'Meara, the winner of 14 PGA Tour events, drove the ball down the center of the fairway, while Couples found the fairway bunker.

O'Meara hit safely onto the green, while Couples grazed the lip of the bunker on his second shot and landed in a greenside trap.

Couples came out beautifully to save par, but O'Meara ended his hopes of joining a three-way playoff by sinking the winning putt. "The last putt I was a little nervous," said O'Meara, who had just one three-putt during the tournament.

"This is what it's all about," said O'Meara of deciding the Masters on the last hole. "This is what we play golf for." Duval and Couples gave all credit to O'Meara and his putting prowess.

"That's how he puts," said Duval. "He's just one of the best putters out here. It shouldn't surprise anyone that he holed that putt. When he's going good, he's as good as there is." Couples, 38, felt angry at himself for botching the par-5 13th, but happy for O'Meara.

"I hugged him at the end and told him I'm thrilled to death for him," said Couples, who

led by two shots going into the final round. "He was fantastic. I think everyone is excited for him."

On the fateful 13th, Couples, tied with Duval at eight under, pulled his tee shot deep into the woods to the left. He miraculously cleared the trees from a dirt road to get back on the fairway, but badly missed his next shot at the green, bouncing off a bank and into a creek. He took a penalty drop, hit onto the green and needed two putts to get down.

"That was really the defining blow," lamented Couples, who charged back two holes later with a short eagle putt that had him tied again for the lead at the last hole.

Fourth place went to Jim Furyk, who fired a 68 for 281, two shots from the winner and one better than Paul Azinger, who finished with a 70 for 282.

Nicklaus followed at 283, a total he shared with 31-year-old David Toms, who tied Masters records with six successive birdies on the back nine and 29 for the homeward half. Toms, playing in his first Masters, finished the day with a remarkable eight-under 64.

Els displaces Woods as No. 1

LONDON (Reuters) - South African Ernie Els displaced Tiger Woods as the world No. 1 yesterday after the American failed to retain his US Masters title. Woods had held top spot for the past 13 weeks.

New Masters' champion Mark O'Meara moves back in to the top 10 in ninth position while Jack Nicklaus, who tied for sixth at the age of 58, returns to the top 200 at 189th place.

Top 20 (US unless stated): 1. Ernie Els (South Africa) 12.30 points, 2. Tiger Woods 11.86, 3. Greg Norman (Australia) 10.07, 4. Davis Love III 9.17, 5. Justin Leonard 8.81, 6. Colin Montgomerie (Britain) 8.77, 7. Nick Price (Zimbabwe) 8.62, 8. David Duval 8.37, 9. Mark O'Meara 8.35, 10. Masashi Uezaki (Japan) 8.00, 11. Phil Mickelson 7.96, 12. Tom Lehman 7.79, 13. Vijay Singh (Fiji) 6.38, 14. Lee Westwood (Britain) 6.28, 15. Scott Hoch 5.98, 16. Tom Watson 5.75, 17. Jim Furyk 5.64, 18. Jesper Parnevik (Sweden) 5.63, 19. Mark Calaverchia 5.54, 20. Fred Couples 5.43.

Argentines train in secret, Israel confident

By ORI LEWIS

The Argentinian national side continued their tour of Jerusalem before getting down to some serious training yesterday ahead of tomorrow's friendly international against Israel.

The visitors met Mayor Ehud Olmert and were given a good view of the Old City, traffic jams and all, before they settled into some serious training in the evening at Teddy Stadium, venue for tomorrow's match.

The Argentinian squad completed its ranks yesterday with the arrival of four players, Ortega Lopez of Valencia, Gustavo Lombardo

of Salamanca, Pablo Fass of Tenerife and Nelson Pivas of Lugano.

The former World Cup holders were followed around the city by quite a few local supporters with star striker Gabriel Batistuta attracting most attention.

However, when it came to watching their idols in action on the pitch, coach Daniel Passarella refused any intrusion either by supporters or the media, as he put his charges through their paces on the Teddy turf.

The Israeli squad, on the other hand had very little to hide as coach Shlomo Scharf gave them a workout at Betar Jerusalem's training facility in the Bayit Vagan neighborhood.

Defender David Amsalem appears doubtful to play after he picked up a groin injury in the Jerusalem derby at the weekend.

Amsalem's place in the starting lineup will probably be taken by Najwan Grayev.

Celta Vigo star, Haim Revivo, suffered a pulled muscle in his back during his side's 2-1 win over Real Madrid in the Spanish league on Saturday but this should not prevent him from playing.

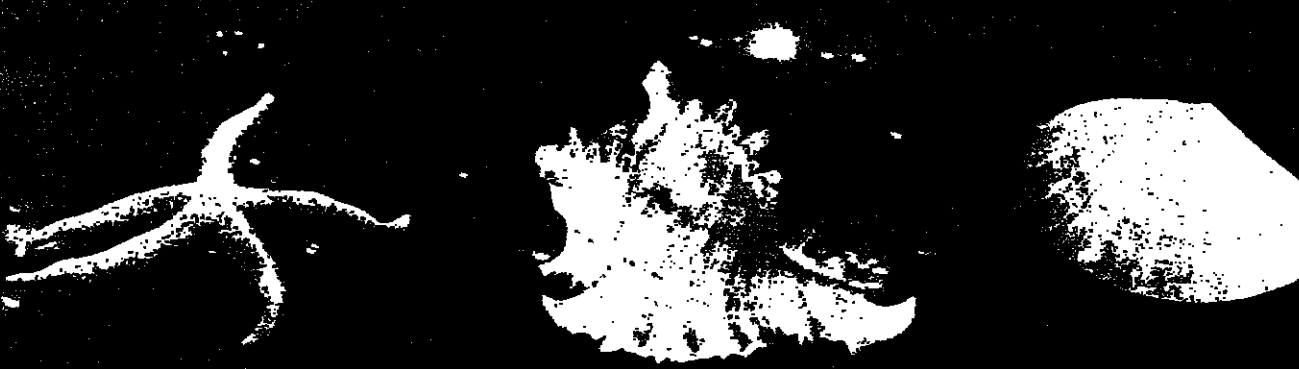
The Israelis have taken much heart from their recent victories in friendlies over European sides and feel that they can make this a first win over the Argentines at the fifth attempt.



A VIEW FOR THE STARS - Argentina's striker Gabriel Batistuta takes in the view of Jerusalem's Old City from a vantage point atop City Hall yesterday.

(Brian Hendler)

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Awesome Arsenal thrash Blackburn 4-1

LONDON (Reuters) - Arsenal produced a stunning performance to win 4-1 at Blackburn last night and took a huge step towards securing the English premier league title.

The Londoners are now just one point behind leaders Manchester United with two games in hand and on the evidence of yesterday's show at Ewood Park they appear certain to win the championship for the first time since 1991.

The match was over as a contest after just 14 minutes by which time Arsenal were 3-0 up. Dennis Bergkamp was at the heart of all three goals.

The Dutch striker, returning from a three-match suspension, drove home the opener after 75 seconds and set up the next two for Ray Parlour.

The midfielder ran on to a precise Bergkamp pass to make it 2-0 after seven minutes and then rammed in a rebound after Alan Fennis had parried a fierce Bergkamp shot.

Arsenal, who have lost only once in their last 25 games, went four up in the 41st minute when Nicolas Anelka broke clear, sold Fennis a clever dummy and sidefooted into the empty net.

Arsenal's previous defeat in the league was inflicted by Blackburn - on December 13 - but Roy Hodgson's side never looked remote-

ly capable of a repeat as they were outclassed in every department.

The hosts improved in a second half played in a snowstorm but had only Kevin Gallacher's sharp volley to show for their efforts as Arsenal were content to sit on their lead.

Delighted Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said: "It was just one of those nights when every chance goes in and everything goes for you."

The premier league relegation issue appeared clear-cut yesterday after the bottom three clubs lost as those above the drop zone either won or drew.

Crystal Palace, Bamsley and Bolton - the three clubs promoted last season - lost, two of them to late goals, and look destined for an immediate return to the first division.

Above them, Tottenham drew 1-1 at home with Coventry, Everton battled to a goalless draw at Wimbledon and Newcastle managed just their third win in 20 league games - 2-1 over Barnsley - to ease their worries.

Andreas Andersson put Newcastle

ahead at St James' Park with his first goal since joining from AC Milan for £3.6 million in January.

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Division Two: Blackpool 1, Brentford 2, Bristol City 1, Watford 1, Fulham 5, Carlisle 0, Grimsby 1, Bristol Rovers 2, Millwall 1, Plymouth 1, Northampton 2, Preston 2, Oldham 0, Wycombe 1, Southend 0, Gillingham 0, Wigan 5, Burnley 1, Wrexham 1, York 2.

Club	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bristol City	43	24	9	6	64	35	82
Watford	43	22	15	6	63	39	81
Fulham	43	20	10	13	58	38	70
Grimsby	43	18	14	11	54	35	68
Wrexham	43	17	14	12	51	49	65
Gillingham	43	18	11	14	50	46	65
Bristol Rovers	43	18	10	15	46	61	64
Northampton	43	14	11	18	36	64	60
Clesterfield	43	15	15	13	43	39	60
Blackpool	43	16	9	18	54	63	57
Bournemouth	43	15	12	15	51	48	57
Wycombe	43	13	16	14	49	52	55
Wigan	43	15	9	18	60	66	54
Preston	43	14	12	17	51	52	54
York	43	13	15	15	49	56	54
Oldham	43	14	14	15	55	51	53
Walsall	43	14	11	18	42	46	53
Millwall	43	14	11	18	42	52	53
Leeds	43	12	14	16	51	58	50
Plymouth	43	12	13	18	53	64	49
Barnsley	43	11	16	16	47	65	49
Barnley	43	11	12	19	47	58	45
Carlisle	43	12	8	22	54	67	44
Southend	43	11	9	23	43	72	42

Division Three: Brighton 1, Mansfield 1, Colchester 4, Hull 3, Barnet 1, Chester 1, Doncaster 1, Notts County 2, Exeter 1, Cambridge United 0, Hartlepool 1, Lincoln City 1, Leyton Orient 2, Stevenage 2, Macclesfield 2, Barnet 0, Peterborough 2, Grimsby 0, Scunthorpe 0, Southend 0, Swans 3, Rochdale 0, Torquay 1, Rotherham 2.

Club	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Notts County	43	27	11	5	72	39	92
Macclesfield	43	28	13	10	55	40	73
Torquay	43	20	11	12	64	53	71
Colchester	43	20	10	13	69	56	70
Scarbrough	43	19	12	12	65	56	69
Barnet	43	19	12	12	59	47	69
Peterborough	43	18	12	13	62	45	66
Lincoln	43	17	14	11	51	47	65
Rochdale	43	17	14	10	60	54	64
Leyton Orient	43	17	11	15	65	53	49
Exeter	43	15	15	13	54	62	62
Scarbrough	43	16	12	14	51	50	60
Mansfield	43	14	16	13	48	53	58
Stevenage	43	15	12	16	59	59	57
Chesham	43	16	9	18	54	57	57
Cambridge	43	17	17	9	57	56	56
Hartlepool	43	11	21	11	57	51	54
Barnsley	43	14	10	19	54	69	52
Swansea	43	15	6	22	47	52	49
Carlisle	43	9	22	12	48	67	49
Hull	43	9	7	27	59	78	34
Brighton	43	6	16	21	30	64	34
Doncaster	43	4	7	32	30	109	19